Problems of COMMUNISM

NEW TURN IN SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY?

Richard Lowenthal

Economic Reorganization

Alec Nove

The Literary World

David Burg
Kathryn Feuer

PEKING VS. MOSCOW IN LATIN AMERICA

Daniel Tretiak

VOL. XII No. 1
Jan-Feb 1963

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Problems of COMMUNISM

NUMBER 1 JAN-FEB VOL. XII 1963

Problems of Communism is a bimonthly publication. Its purpose is to provide analyses and significant background information on various aspects of world communism today. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Government. Any reprinted materials in *Problems of Communism* have been copyright cleared and, unless specific restrictions are noted, may be republished in all countries except the United States and Canada. Subscriptions or single copies may be obtained from the distributing sources noted at the bottom of this page. Comments and suggestions from readers should be addressed to:

The Editors, *Problems of Communism*
United States Information Agency
1776 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington 25, D. C.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

The End of an Illusion, *by Richard Lowenthal* 1
Revamping the Economy, *by Alec Nove* 10

COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking's Economy: Upwards or Downwards?, *by Edwin Jones* 17

NONCOMMUNIST AREAS

Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Latin America, *by Daniel Tretiak* 26

THE SOVIET UNION

The New Image of Russia: II
The Role of the Press, *by Leo Gruliow* 34
A Correspondent in Moscow, *by Sacha Simon* 40
The "Cold War" on the Literary Front: III *by David Burg* 44

BOOKS

The Vagaries of Soviet Literature, *by Kathryn Feuer* 59

NOTES AND VIEWS

"Consumerism" in Hungary, *by George Gomori* 64
Khrushchev on Stalin, *by A. J. Groth* 66
Censorship in Russia: A Note 70

PLEASE NOTE:

Outside the United States, *Problems of Communism* may be obtained from the nearest office of the United States Information Service. For sale within the United States by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price per copy: $.35. Subscription price: $1.50 a year. Additional $.50 for foreign mailing.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The End of an Illusion

By Richard Lowenthal

"World War I and the October Revolution ushered in the general crisis of capitalism. The second stage of this crisis developed at the time of World War II and the socialist revolutions in a number of European and Asian countries. ***World capitalism has now entered a new, third stage of that crisis, the principal feature of which is that its development was not due to a world war."***—The 1961 Program of the CPSU.

THE CUBAN CRISIS of October 1962 has been widely hailed as a possible turning point in Soviet foreign policy. If it proves to have been that—and at the moment of writing the signs pointing that way are strong, but not yet conclusive—it will not be because it has marked a major change in the relation of forces, but because it has ended a major illusion in the Kremlin: the illusion most succinctly expressed in the above-quoted passage from the 1961 Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

According to that passage, as the reader will notice, the general crisis of capitalism is developing in distinct "stages" separated by considerable intervals: the former correspond to the acute phases of Communist expansion, the latter to the enforced pauses for consolidation. The announcement of a new, third stage of the general crisis (first made in closely similar terms in the 1960 Declaration of 81 Communist parties) thus implied that conditions had arisen in which major new Communist advances, comparable in importance to the conquest of power in Russia after World War I and in Eastern Europe and China after World War II, could be achieved—and this time without another world war. That was the rationale for the worldwide, but carefully controlled, Soviet political offensive; that is the illusion that may have been buried in Cuba.

Professor Lowenthal, of the Free University of Berlin, last appeared in this journal with "Communism and Nationalism" (November-December 1962).

In fact, the illusion and the offensive strategy based on it were several years older than the theoretical formula announcing a "third stage" of the general crisis of capitalism; they may be dated from the fall of 1957, when Khrushchev had won the succession struggle in the Soviet Union and overcome the crisis of destalinization in Eastern Europe, and when the launching of the first sputniks had heralded the advent of the intercontinental rocket and the achievement of an effective nuclear balance of terror. Ever since then, the early post-Stalin Soviet effort to reduce international tension and consolidate the postwar conquests was replaced by the deliberate creation of crises in various parts of the globe, undertaken in the hope of achieving major revolutionary advances. The difference between the Soviet offensive strategy of the past five years and that advocated by the Chinese Communists lay only in the Soviet determination to keep the risks of each operation under strict control, and to alternate the creation of crises with offers of negotiation whenever necessary for that purpose. But the crises were always ignited in the definite expectation that the subsequent negotiation would result in a substantial gain for the Communist cause.

The Grand Illusion

It would be quite mistaken to assume that those optimistic expectations were founded on nothing more solid than Mr. Khrushchev's ebullient self-confidence, or

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a vague general belief in the irresistible strength of the revolutionary cause. At the start of his offensive, Khrushchev was heir to a 40-year tradition of Soviet foreign policy which had clearly established the principle that revolutionary advances could not be undertaken at will according to schedule, but must depend on objective conditions offering a favorable opportunity. Evidently, he had precise if erroneous grounds for believing that such a favorable opportunity existed.

First among those grounds was, of course, the achievement of qualitative nuclear parity. The development of thermonuclear bombs by both the United States and the USSR had been the basis for the mutual conviction, gained at the Geneva summit meeting of 1955, that neither side would deliberately start a world war, and for Khrushchev's announcement at the 20th Party Congress in 1956 that such a war was no longer "fatalistically inevitable." Now the invention of the intercontinental rocket, by making the United States as vulnerable to thermonuclear attack as its outlying allies and the Soviet Union, removed the last American qualitative advantage; correspondingly, it reduced the credibility of United States pledges to protect exposed Western positions against the pressure of superior local concentrations of Soviet forces. Though Khrushchev was not prepared to put those pledges to the test by direct military attacks on America's outlying allies, he set out to undermine their confidence by an alternation of threats with proposals for a Soviet-American dialogue. As "massive retaliation" for local attacks became less probable, while no other means of honoring its alliances seemed open to the United States, Khrushchev expected the alliances to disintegrate under his probing. The paralysis induced by the nuclear stalemate was to play the role which the paralysis of postwar exhaustion had played in the earlier major advances of Communist power.

The second ground for Soviet confidence was the revolutionary potential of the process of decolonization. In the late 1940's, when most of Asia was released from colonial rule, Stalin had failed to appreciate the significance of the event and badly mishandled Soviet relations with the new nationalist regimes. But after his death, both Moscow and Peking turned decisively and skillfully to a policy of respect for the independence of the emerging states and offered them economic aid and support in all conflicts with the "imperialists." The Suez crisis, moreover, opened exciting vistas for such an anti-imperialist "united front diplomacy" at the very moment when a second major wave of decolonization was starting in Africa. For Suez seemed to confirm that even in countries which had peacefully acquired "formal" independence or had long enjoyed it, new conflicts with the big capitalist investors were inevitable as the traditionally underprivileged nations struggled for independent development. And who would be their reliable ally in all such conflicts but the Soviet bloc? Under the umbrella of the nuclear deadlock, the Soviets believed, no dangerous direct intervention in favor of such movements for "national liberation" would be needed: it would be sufficient to send them arms and advisers, and to deter any major imperialist intervention by the mere threat of armed counter-intervention. Colonial and post-colonial revolutions that gained victory with such help would thus prove a powerful lever for shifting the world balance of political power to the Soviets' advantage without any direct challenge to the military "balance of terror."

OBVIOUSLY, REVOLUTIONS THAT were victorious in distant lands and without the direct intervention of the Soviet armed forces would not produce satellite regimes, even if they came under Communist leadership. But—and this was the third factor in the optimistic calculation—Khrushchev had abandoned Stalin's view that the creation of satellites, strictly subordinate to the Soviet Union, was the only safe form of Communist expansion. On the basis of the Yugoslav and particularly the Chinese experience, he believed in the need for Communist parties to find their own roads to power according to national conditions, and in the harmony of interests among independent and equal Communist states; Chou En-lai's success at Bandung in staking out the claim that the Communist powers were the true champions of Afro-Asian solidarity and Mao Tse-tung's role in helping the Soviet Union to overcome the crisis of destalinization in Eastern Europe had seemed to confirm that hopeful analysis. The arrival of a plurality of Communist states thus meant to Khrushchev not only the end of the long period of "capitalist encirclement" of an isolated Soviet Union, but the emergence of a "socialist commonwealth" capable of indefinite, harmonious expansion by new independent revolutions.

As a fourth and last factor, Khrushchev's hopes for achieving through his own reforms a spectacular increase in the economic efficiency and political attractiveness of the Soviet regime, both in Russia and in Eastern Europe, must be mentioned. His version of "peaceful coexistence" has never meant a renunciation of the use or threat of force in favor of an exclusive concentration on economic competition; but it has always comprised such competition as one of its elements, including a genuine effort to raise the standard of living of the Soviet and satellite peoples. For Khrushchev believed

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that the existing Soviet industrial and military basis, combined with the striking improvement in industrial and agricultural productivity expected from his reforms, would permit him simultaneously to maintain nuclear parity as well as superiority in conventional armaments, to win friends among the uncommitted new states by substantial credits for their development, and to raise the welfare of his own subjects by a rapid growth in the output of foodstuffs and consumer goods.

Finally, all these factors were expected to reinforce each other by their interaction. For instance, decolonization would create grave economic difficulties for the "imperialist" powers, and would therefore intensify both their international rivalry and their internal class conflicts; hence the cohesion of the Western alliance and its capacity to resist Soviet bloc pressure would be weakened. The improvement of living conditions within the Soviet bloc and their deterioration in the West would be an object lesson for the emergent nations about to choose their road to development. Again, external and economic successes would facilitate harmonious cooperation among the Communist states as much as political and economic setbacks would undermine the unity of their opponents.

Thus, while the Soviets at no time adopted the Chinese formula that the "socialist camp" had already achieved clear superiority in strength over its opponents —that "the East wind prevails over the West wind"— their analysis clearly implied that such superiority could be won within the immediate future and without a world war: the nuclear balance could be both used and bypassed by a revolutionary strategy of limited and controlled risks. Dynamically speaking, the forces of "socialism" had already become the factor determining the main trend of our epoch; and the formula of the "third stage" of the general crisis of capitalism implied the expectation of historic victories within a few years.

Disappointments of Decolonization

A glance at events since 1957 will show that the worldwide offensive based on the above analysis has not attained its major objectives; nor has the analysis itself been confirmed in its main outlines. Most of the grounds on which Khrushchev's confidence was founded have proved to contain some small or large elements of truth, and the record includes some local Communist successes—notably in Cuba and in Laos. But the overall picture is radically different from the Communist blueprint. We find continued East-West deadlock rather than a victorious Communist breakthrough; continued independent development of the new, ex-colonial states rather than their progressive alignment with the Soviet bloc; far more serious rivalries and conflicts among the Communist powers than within the Western alliance; and surprising economic vigor among the Western losers from decolonization combined with a disappointingly slow improvement of living conditions in the Soviet bloc.

For a number of years the colonial and post-colonial "liberation movements" seemed to offer the strongest initial confirmation of Communist hopes. During the immediate post-Suez period, Nasser's Egypt seemed fated to slide into one-sided economic dependence on the Soviet bloc; and Cairo became the seat of the "Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization" founded on the initiative of the Communist powers. The Iraqi revolution of 1958 caused alarm in the West, and the influence of the Communists rose rapidly during the early months of the new regime. Later that year, Guinea became the first French colony in Africa to vote for immediate independence in open political conflict with France, and French economic reprisals resulted in a strong pro-Soviet orientation of the new state. In 1959, Castro's victory in Cuba proved the prelude not only to revolutionary measures strongly influenced by Communist models, but to a sharp conflict first with American private interests and then with the United States government, which in turn led to a rapid growth of Cuban economic dependence on the Soviet bloc and to the proclamation of Soviet "protection" for the regime in 1960. During the same year, events in the Congo— particularly the secession of Katanga with the backing of Belgian and British mining interests and the assassination in Katangese territory of Patrice Lumumba, which led to his being proclaimed a martyr of anti-colonialism by both Communists and Pan-Africans— contributed to the growth of a strongly anti-Western outlook in the new states then rapidly emerging all over Africa. Finally, the prolonged colonial war in Algeria was not only a continued source of weakness for France and of tensions within the Atlantic alliance, but of anti-Western and pro-Communist sympathies among Afro-Asian nationalists.

Yet nearly every one of those (from a Communist viewpoint) promising developments was followed quickly by disappointments. As early as 1958 Nasser succeeded in detaching himself sufficiently from the Soviet embrace to arrange with the Syrian non-Communist Left a merger of that country with Egypt as a means to prevent a Communist takeover in Syria, and promptly started a ruthless campaign of suppression against the Syrian Communists. Kassem in Iraq at first willingly accepted support of the Communists against

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a similar merger, but once he had consolidated his regime, he sharply rebuffed (in the summer of 1959) their claims for a share of power and severely limited the scope of their party activity. Guinea's honeymoon with the Soviet Union lasted longer, but ended abruptly in late 1961 owing not only to disappointments with the quality of Soviet bloc deliveries under the aid agreements, but above all to the discovery of efforts, backed by Soviet and French Communists, to organize in Guinea Communist cadres rivaling the ruling PDG. In the Congo, the turn of the United States to active support for restoring the unity of the country and the constitutional function of its central parliament led in 1961 to the quick isolation of the pro-Communist group around Gizenga and to a reorientation of many African leaders from militant anti-Westernism to genuine neutrality. Even in Algeria the final achievement of independence and the installation of the new regime has now been followed by a ban on the Communist Party. Only in Cuba, the definite alignment of the Castro regime with the Soviet bloc, further hardened by the abortive American-backed invasion of 1961, reached its logical conclusion with the merger between the remnants of Castro's original movement and the Communist Party, the formation of a Leninist one-party regime, and the proclamation of a "socialist" republic; nor did this consummation at first impair the powerful attraction exerted by "Fidelism" on the anti-Yankee Left throughout Latin America.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT of initial Communist hopes in so many cases forms too clear a pattern to be explained by a series of accidents: it points to a basic error in the Communist analysis. To be sure, conflicts with major capitalist groups are bound to be frequent in ex-colonial or semi-colonial countries striving for independent planned modernization, but it does not follow that in such conflicts the Western governments will necessarily back the capitalist interests involved, regardless of the political consequences, and that therefore the struggle for independent development must depend on Soviet support against the "imperialists." Neither is it true that the underdeveloped countries, once they reject the model of classical liberal capitalism as not applicable to their conditions, have no alternative but to adopt the model of Soviet communism. On the contrary, the nationalist leaders have generally found that they can afford to accept aid from both West and East, and can use the freedom of maneuver assured by this policy in order to grope for their own, undoctrinaire road of development; and the Soviets, while attacking this attitude in their propaganda and prophesying its inevitable doom, have implicitly admitted its practicality by continuing to grant substantial development credits to the "bourgeois nationalist" regimes they criticize so fervently.

Of course, it cannot be predicted at this stage whether all or even most of these nationalist regimes will succeed in achieving their goals of modernization by the eclectic methods they practice—but this is a long-term problem. What matters in the present context is that, contrary to Communist expectations, decolonization has not helped the Soviets to achieve a decisive breakthrough within a few critical years.

Political and Economic Failures

The Khrushchevian belief in a pre-established harmony of interests between independent Communist powers emerging from independent revolutions has proved even more radically wrong. There is no need here to review the development of Sino-Soviet differences from the first visible symptoms in 1958 to the difficult compromise achieved at the Moscow conference of Communist parties in 1960.* Since then, the conflict has become more bitter still. Albania's alignment with China has forced the Soviet leaders to use the harshest means of diplomatic and economic pressure in their effort to maintain ideological conformity within Eastern Europe, while the Chinese leaders, by backing Albania against that pressure and by defending Stalin's memory against Khrushchev, have made it clear that they are no longer aiming at obtaining aid from the present Soviet leadership, but rather seeking its overthrow—an enterprise the prospects of which they evidently overestimate. The result is that while the alliance of the two leading Communist governments and parties is being formally maintained, both not only engage in open worldwide competition for control of other Communist states and movements, but conduct their separate foreign policies without any regard to their nominal alliance and often in direct opposition to each other.

It follows that Moscow can no longer count on the strength of Peking and its satellites—or for that matter on any other Communist government that is not under its direct imperial control—as an asset in pursuing its worldwide offensive. This was first made obvious when early in 1960 Khrushchev went out of his way to demonstrate his detachment from China's quarrels with Indian and Indonesia, which hampered his own efforts

* For a discussion of this subject see this author's "Schism Among the Faithful," *Problems of Communism,* No. 1, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to win influence in these countries. During the past year, China has brought two of the smaller Asian Communist states—North Korea and North Vietnam—under her control (while Moscow retained Outer Mongolia as its satellite) and at the same time began establishing her own buffer zone of semi-dependent, non-Communist neutrals, comprising Nepal, Cambodia and Burma. Even more important, by its demonstration of military superiority Peking has made a major effort to break India's capacity of opposing Chinese influence in Asia. The Soviets have not only deplored that action as threatening their own friendly relations with the Indian government and promoting Western influence in India, but have in fact opposed it by continuing to supply New Delhi with economic aid; whether or not the promised Soviet fighter planes are delivered as well, it is obvious that any kind of aid in the present conditions frees Indian resources for resistance to China. So, far from winning India to their side, the Soviets now have to strain their alliance with China to a breaking point merely to keep India non-aligned!

THIS IS NOT the place for attempting to draw up a balance sheet of the effects so far achieved by Khrushchev's economic reforms in the USSR and in Eastern Europe. It is obvious, however, that while the achievements have been substantial, they have lagged far behind his expectations—and, indeed, behind the rate of progress required by his worldwide political offensive. Soviet agriculture after the record harvest of 1958 has not continued to fulfill Khrushchev's high hopes and has completely failed even to approach the rate of growth provided for in the Seven-Year Plan. This failure has been felt all the more painfully because of the steady stream of demands for Soviet grain from the Communist states of Eastern Europe. In the realm of industrial consumer goods, too, progress has been slow, fitful and unsatisfactory in quality and range. While these disappointments must in part be attributed to the fact that some of the original targets were beyond reach no matter what economic policy was followed, in important respects the failures were also due to the particular policies pursued. On one hand, the economic reforms were too half-hearted and inconsistent to bring about the required steady all-round increase in industrial and agricultural productivity; on the other, the limits thus imposed on the national product have continued to force on the leaders a hard choice of priorities, and given the increase in international tension produced by the offensive strategy, that choice has in recent years necessarily favored armaments and foreign aid.

As a result, Russia and the whole Soviet bloc have so far failed to compete seriously with the attraction of Western standards of living, and that failure has been all the more striking because of the unexpectedly vigorous expansion shown by the West European Common Market. While the Soviets had all along taken a serious view of the *political* importance of the movement toward West European integration—chiefly because of the tightening of bonds between Western Germany and France and the growing weight of the German Federal Republic within the Western alliance—the extent of its *economic* success has clearly come as a surprise to them. The fact that states which are among the main losers from decolonization are proving capable of assuring a steady rise in the standard of living of their workers has not yet been digested by Communist theory, but it has already produced sharp policy disagreements among West European Communist leaders; the British application to join the Common Market fits equally badly into the Communist view of the growing contradictions within the "imperialist camp" and into the practical needs of Soviet diplomacy. In this whole field, far from advancing according to plan, the Soviets have increasingly been forced to react to the initiative successfully seized by the West.

Nuclear Challenge Upset

Yet the impressive achievements of European consolidation would not have been possible if the first factor in Khrushchev's strategic calculation—the political exploitation of Soviet nuclear parity and conventional arms superiority to bring about the disintegration of the Western alliance—had played its assigned role in the past five years. Here again, as in the case of the revolutionary potential of decolonization, the Soviet analysis contained important elements of truth, but erred in underestimating the ability of the West to respond realistically and flexibly to the challenge.

There can be no doubt that the new vulnerability of the United States to weapons of mass destruction has indeed reduced the credibility of American pledges to protect its exposed allies, by a nuclear strike if necessary, against any attack on their territory. The effort of the United States to strengthen its own and its allies' conventional forces sufficiently to raise the "nuclear threshold," as well as the various projects to create in Europe either an independent nuclear force under French leadership or an "integrated" nuclear force under the NATO command, are proof that reliance on the automatism of American nuclear retaliation is no

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

longer absolute, and that its deterrent effect has been diminished by a margin of doubt. This has resulted in prolonged discussions, repeated disagreements, and even occasional outbreaks of mutual suspicion within the Western alliance, but such tensions have never approached the point of threatening the existence of the alliance or paralyzing its capacity for action.

There seem to be three main reasons why the Western alliance has been able to withstand the test of this situation. The first is that by leaving substantial American forces in the main danger area in Europe; by increasing, particularly in the last two years, its nuclear as well as conventional arms strength; and by having reaffirmed in the spring of 1962 its determination to use nuclear force in reply to any attack on *vital* positions in Europe—and to use it in the first place against pin-pointed military targets—the United States has sustained the credibility of its pledges. The second reason is that even those West European leaders who are least inclined to rely on American pledges alone are firmly convinced that in the face of Soviet pressure an inadequate American protection is vastly preferable to no American protection at all. The third reason is that, as the Soviets' own behavior shows, American deterrence has remained effective despite the new margin of doubt. The Soviet Union cannot afford to grab West Berlin or interrupt the city's communications by military action as long as it believes that by doing so it would run a serious risk of starting a nuclear war; and the risk remains serious even if the probability of an American nuclear response is judged as "only" 60 or 70 percent rather than 90 or 100 percent. Hence the incessant probing of Western intentions by formal diplomacy, by informal rumor-spreading talk, and by minor unilateral actions and incidents; hence also the prolonged alternation of threats and offers of negotiation, of time limits and their withdrawal, of maximum and minimum demands on Berlin.

For it is in Berlin, of course, that the Soviet effort to disrupt the Western alliance by military pressure has been put to its most crucial test. There have been other, more peripheral exercises, like the pressure on Turkey after the 1957 Syrian upheaval, the initial Soviet backing for the Chinese bombardment of Quemoy in 1958, the efforts to prevent the stationing of American intermediate-range missiles in Europe, the attempts to blackmail Iran out of the CENTO alliance, and the threatening notes sent to Norway, Turkey and Pakistan after the U2 affair. None of them can be said to have achieved definite results, but none of them was pursued with such tenacity as the attack on the Western position in Berlin and the Federal Republic's claim to speak for the whole of Germany. For here, the Soviets were convinced, success was vital if their own East German protectorate was to be stabilized and the trend toward West European consolidation reversed; here, too, the geographic weakness of the Western position was particularly favorable to the use of local military strength as an instrument of political pressure; and here, they knew, the prestige of the United States was committed so heavily that a local defeat was bound to have repercussions among its allies all over the globe.

Hence the fact that the Western powers, despite all their efforts to find an accommodation, were not prepared to accept (either openly or in the disguise of a "compromise") the essential Soviet demands on Berlin and Germany, put the value of the whole Soviet strategy of pressure in doubt and raised the question whether it was to be abandoned or pursued with a bolder disregard for risks. Throughout the greater part of 1962, the Soviet return to their maximum demands for a withdrawal of the Western garrisons, the visible increase of Soviet military preparations in Eastern Germany, and the stepping up of incidents along the Berlin wall combined with a refusal to discuss them on a Four-Power basis, indicated a willingness to raise the pressure, even at a higher risk, to force a breakthrough.

It was in that situation that the Soviet leaders tried a new and daring device: they attempted to upset the nuclear balance by the surprise installation of Soviet-controlled intermediate-range missiles in Cuba. The announcement of a military aid agreement with Cuba on September 2nd was followed on September 11th by the famous Soviet government statement pledging the island's defense against an allegedly impending attack by the United States, and simultaneously postponing the next effort to settle the Berlin issue until "after the American elections." As is now obvious, the Soviets were in fact waiting for their new Cuban missile sites to become operational in order to conduct the next negotiations on Berlin, and presumably all future negotiations with the United States, under that pressure. When the maneuver was prematurely discovered and foiled by determined American action, two points were convincingly demonstrated to the Kremlin: that the existing nuclear balance was not sufficient to paralyze the United States, and that attempts to overturn it by surprise were likely to entail a prohibitive risk.

Pause for a Breathing Spell?

As we have seen, reliance on the supposed paralyzing effect of the nuclear balance was a key element in the Soviet theory that an opportunity existed in the present period for achieving a major historic advance of com-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munism without a new world war. It follows that the failure of the Cuban gamble, coming on top of the prolonged deadlock over Berlin which that gamble had been intended to break, must have been a major blow to Khrushchev's five-year-old illusion. Moreover, the blow has come at a time when disappointment of the other hopes on which the illusion was founded had also reached a critical point: it may indeed be said that instead of the expected interaction of factors facilitating a major Soviet advance, we are now witnessing an interaction of Soviet setbacks.

Thus, disclosure of the manner in which Castro was first used as a pawn in Soviet nuclear diplomacy and then abandoned by his "protectors" has clearly damaged both the prestige of "Fidelism" and the illusions about Soviet "anti-imperialism" among the left-wing nationalists of Latin America; while some Communist and Fidelist groups have now put their trust in Peking, other leading Leftists have rejected all thought of further cooperation with any form of communism in disgust. This setback to the Soviet chances of exploiting "national liberation movements" in the Western hemisphere coincides with the damage caused to Soviet influence in India and some other neutral Afro-Asian countries by Peking's decision to humiliate the Indians in a major military operation.

Again, the Soviet retreat from Cuba and the Chinese aggression against India have brought Soviet-Chinese relations to a point where the two allies seem to have abandoned hope of restoring unity on their respective terms; each side now only seems anxious to assign to the other the responsibility for an eventual break. Peking's charges of a Cuban "Munich," its backing of Castro's obstruction to a settlement, and its decision publicly to defend this viewpoint (as well as the cause of Albania) at all the recent Communist party congresses show as complete an unconcern for possible Soviet reactions as does its Indian policy. The only limitation the Chinese leadership still imposes on its polemics is that in public it confines such epithets as "renegade" and "traitor" to the "modern revisionists headed by Tito"; their extension to Khrushchev is so far left to the Albanians and to internal communications for the information of Chinese Communist cadres. Conversely, a similar complete unconcern for Peking's reaction has been shown by the Soviets not only in their retreat from Cuba and their continued aid to India, but also in Khrushchev's demonstratively cordial reception of Tito in the Kremlin (which was in flat contradiction to the ideological condemnation of Yugoslav revisionism in the 1960 Moscow declaration), and in his recent bitter and sarcastic counterattacks on "adventurous" critics of Soviet policy who incite the Albanians to their slanders and indulge in verbal radicalism ignoring the realities of the nuclear age. In practice, both sides proceed on the assumption that there is no longer one Communist "camp," but two.

Finally, the prolonged failure of Soviet military and political pressure to achieve a major international breakthrough on one side, and the success of West European economic integration on the other, seem to have made the Kremlin acutely conscious both of the need for more effective reforms of the Soviet and Comecon planning machinery and of the cost in terms of domestic welfare involved in maintaining a futile international offensive with its attendant degree of tension and armament needs. By all the laws of Leninist reasoning, the Soviet leaders should have realized by now that the "third stage of the general crisis of capitalism" has not materialized, that their offensive has failed because it was based on illusions, and that the actual world situation requires an effort on their part to relax tension, to consolidate their positions and to concentrate on improving conditions in their own empire until more real and less risky opportunities for expansion arise.

THERE ARE, indeed, a number of indications that such a turn is at least under consideration in Moscow—indications that do not yet take the form of definite changes of policy, but of changes of tone, atmosphere and even timetable. But a real strategic turn will not be easy to accomplish at the present stage, as a short survey of similar turns in the past will show.

The end of the revolutionary crisis in Europe that followed World War I was clearly recognized by Lenin during the winter of 1920/21. But the policy of "normalizing" relations with the capitalist world, which he then started, was soon interrupted when the German crisis of 1923 raised new high hopes in Moscow; it was definitely accepted only when Stalin announced a "relative stabilization of capitalism" in 1924. By 1928, he proclaimed that this phase was approaching its end, and that a "third period" of revolutionary chances was about to begin. In a sense, that "third period" was the true model of the present "third stage of the general crisis"—for though the world economic crisis seemed to confirm the prediction, it brought no Communist successes and ended indeed with the rise of Hitler and the crushing of the strongest Communist party in Europe. It seems well established, however, that Stalin—in contrast to Khrushchev in recent years—did not really share the illusion he propagated; he certainly did not act on it in his foreign policy and only seems to have

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supported a "left" formula in the Comintern as a pretext for purging it of leaders sympathizing with his own domestic "right" opposition. Even so, it took till 1934/35 before the illusions of the "third period" were formally buried and attention was concentrated on preserving the Soviet Union by playing on the conflict between the Axis and the Western Powers.

After the Second World War, the Soviet advance in Europe was definitely stopped by 1948/49, and the Communist conquest of China was completed at the same time. Yet the obvious turn toward consolidation was not accomplished at once: illusions about the situation in Asia involved the Communists there in a number of futile risings culminating in the Korean war, while in Eastern Europe the hunt for "Titoists" prevented any rational policy. Even though the need for relaxing international tension seems to have been recognized toward the end of Stalin's reign, the turn toward a new

Facts are Facts . . .

On Averting a World War

MOSCOW: Certain dogmatists have slid down to Trotskyite positions and are driving the Soviet Union and other socialist countries onto the path of launching a new world war. . . . Apparently the Albanian leaders and those who are pushing them have lost faith in the possibility of socialism's victory without a war between states . . . [and consider] that only through war, and the destruction of millions of people, can communism be reached. But, after all, this is madness which . . . can drive millions . . . away from the Communist movement. . . .

If the leftist shouters and dogmatists are given a good scratch, it will be easy to see that at the basis of their demonstrative valor there is nothing but fear of imperialism, disbelief in the possibility of conquering the capitalist order in peaceful competition. This is precisely the characteristic trait of petty bourgeois instability and wavering which was so mercilessly unmasked and derided by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.*

PEKING: Those who attack the Chinese Communist Party misrepresent . . . [our] correct viewpoint . . . as showing lack of faith in the possibility of averting a world war. As a matter of fact, they themselves have no faith in the possibility of preventing a world war by relying on the strength of the masses and their struggles, and they are opposed to relying on the masses and their struggles. They want the people of the world to believe in the "sensibleness," the "assurances," and the "good intentions" of imperialism and to place their hopes for world peace on "mutual conciliation," "mutual concessions," "mutual accomodation," and "sensible compromises" with imperialism.

These persons do not scruple to beg imperialism for peace at the expense of the fundamental interests of the peoples of various countries and at the expense of revolutionary principles, and they even demand that others, too, sacrifice revolutionary principles. . . .†

On the "Paper Tiger" Proposition

MOSCOW: It is true, of course, that the nature of imperialism has not changed. But today imperialism is not the same as in the days when it undividedly ruled the world. If it is now a paper tiger, those who speak thus know that this paper tiger has nuclear teeth. It still can use them, and one cannot treat it lightheartedly. In relations with the imperialist countries it is possible to accept mutual compromises, and, on the other hand, to have all the means necessary in order to crush the aggressors if they unleash a war. . . .

One must be very careful and not hastily indulge in irresponsible accusations that . . . some carry on an offensive against imperialism . . . while others allegedly display liberalism. These problems can be correctly understood . . . only if one takes into account the time, place, and circumstances in which one has to act.*

PEKING: . . . there are . . . persons who assert that today imperialism has nuclear teeth, so how can it be called a paper tiger? . . . if [these persons] are not ignorant, they are deliberately distorting this proposition of the Chinese Communist Party . . . [which is] looking at the problem as a whole and from a long-term point of view. . . .

When in his talk with Anna Louise Strong, Comrade Mao Tse-tung first put forward the proposition that imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers, the imperialists already had nuclear weapons. In his talk Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out: "The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the US reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it is not. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapons."†

Sources: (*) *N. Khrushchev's speech to the Supreme Soviet, December 12, 1962.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"breathing spell" was seriously carried out only during the interregnum following his death; and it ended, as we have shown, as soon as Khrushchev was in full control.

Evidently, acceptance of a "pause" is always difficult for a party regime with a worldwide sense of mission, and perhaps more difficult the greater its actual power on the world scene has become. We cannot, therefore, count on the turn being completed rapidly; still less should we expect Khrushchev and his regime to "end the Cold War" in the sense of abandoning their long-term, worldwide aims. Yet a turn based on the admission that no major progress toward those aims can be achieved "for the time being"—that coexistence must be based on respect for the frontiers of non-Communist power *for a period* in order to permit a concentration on domestic improvements in an atmosphere of international detente—would make a real difference in practice:

A Comradely Dialogue

What is a Socialist Country?

MOSCOW: Some people maintain that Yugoslavia is not a socialist country. Allow me to ask: And what kind of a country is it? . . . One should not think that, like Buddha, one can ignore facts, utter truths and establish which country is socialist and which is not. . . .

It is known that in Yugoslavia . . . there is no private capital, private undertakings, landowners, or private banks. We also see that the Yugoslav Communists and their leaders are directing their efforts toward . . . the strengthening of the conquests of socialism.

Therefore if one were to proceed from the objective laws, from the teaching of Marxism-Leninism, then it is impossible to deny that Yugoslavia is a socialist country. We proceed from this in our policy. . . .*

PEKING: After all, facts are facts and renegades from communism remain renegades from communism. The judgement [condemning the Yugoslav League of Communists of international opportunism and revisionism] arrived at in the [1960] Moscow statement cannot be overturned by anyone, whoever he may be. Far from giving up their thoroughly revisionist program, the Titoites have stuck to it in the draft Yugoslav Constitution which they published not long ago. . . .

With the development of the Tito group's revisionist line and their increasing dependence on US imperialism, Yugoslavia has long ceased to be a socialist country, and the gradual restoration of capitalism in Yugoslavia began long ago. . . .†

The Main Danger to Communism

MOSCOW: The left-wing sectarian disease is nurtured by nationalism and, in its turn, it feeds nationalism. It becomes unbearable when it manifests itself in the actions of a party which is in power and upon whose policy the destinies of nations to a great extent depend. It becomes dangerous insofar as it is directed against the policy of the Communist movement on such vitally important questions as those of war and peace, which affect the fate of all mankind.

. . . left-wing opportunism, dogmatism and sectarianism are increasingly emerging as a serious danger within the world Communist movement. Not to see this means that one is afraid to look facts in the face . . . and that one does not understand the responsibility devolving upon Marxists-Leninists in our time.

The Soviet Communists, who hold the unity of the ranks of the world Communist movement above everything else, will wage a decisive struggle against right-wing opportunism as well as against left-wing opportunism, which is now no less dangerous than revisionism.*

PEKING: At present, the modern revisionists are opposing Marxism-Leninism under the pretext of opposing dogmatism, they are renouncing revolution under the pretext of opposing "left" adventurism, and are advocating unprincipled compromise and capitulation under the pretext of flexibility in tactics. If a resolute struggle against modern revisionism is not waged, the international Communist movement will be seriously harmed. . . .

No person, no political party, and no group—however much they may have done for the workers' movement in the past—can avoid becoming the servant of the bourgeoisie and being cast aside by the proletariat, once they depart from the road of Marxism-Leninism and step on and slide down the road of revisionism. . . .

We feel that Marxism-Leninism is at a new and important historical juncture. The struggle between the Marxist-Leninist trend and the anti-Marxist-Leninist revisionist trend is once again being placed on the Communist agenda in all countries in an acute form.†

(†) ***Editorial in* Jen-min jih-pao *(People's Daily, Peking), December 31, 1962.***

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it would permit joint diplomatic efforts to reduce the risk of nuclear war, and it would open up a chance to stop the arms race and channel energies on both sides into competition in predominantly constructive rather than military efforts.

Moreover, even if such a "breathing spell" was consciously conceived as temporary—as under Khrushchev it would be— it might at the present stage have a longer-term effect than its authors intended. The chance for that would depend on the West's ability to avoid offering the Soviets new offensive opportunities by serious internal divisions and policy failures; on the as yet unforeseeable development of the disruptive tendencies within the former Communist bloc, which would inevitably be further strengthened by such a turn; and above all, in interaction with these two factors, on the evolution of the Soviet regime itself. A period of relaxed international tension and concentration on internal progress is bound to strengthen those modern forces in Soviet society which have no need for an ideological party regime pledged to a policy of permanent conflict with the non-Communist world. While the present writer does not share the optimism of those who expect the new social forces to change the basic outlook of the ruling party, he cannot help wondering whether one day they will not be strong and confident enough to use one of the periodic succession crises of the regime to reduce the party's influence and end its absolute domination. The longer the period of relative quiet, the stronger the forces of change will become—and the better the prospect that Khrushchevism, like Stalinism before it, will eventually produce its own gravediggers.

Revamping the Economy

By Alec Nove

THIS ARTICLE REPRESENTS an attempt to interpret the latest series of major domestic reforms initiated by the Khrushchev regime. Announced in the main at the November plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, the reforms promise fundamental changes in the organization of the Communist Party and in the Soviet planning system, profoundly affecting the relationship between the professional party officials and the planners. We will be concerned here primarily with the impact of these measures on the non-agricultural sectors of the Soviet economy.

The task of interpretation is beset with many difficulties. In the first place, the reforms are still incomplete. Khrushchev indicated certain general lines of change, filling in some detail but also leaving a number of matters for later decision. If his initial proposals are modified before being enacted, it will not be the first time: in significant respects the *sovnarkhoz* law of May 1957 differed from the "theses" announced by him two months earlier. Furthermore, certain essential features of the proposed reforms are somewhat obscure, in that it is hard to imagine how they can work out in practice. Consequently the present paper must be seen as a very preliminary exercise in interpretation.

Presumably even the most fanatical Kremlinologists, the most fervent devotees of the "power-struggle" interpretation of events, would agree that the changes have an economic purpose, that they are connected with endeavors to achieve greater economic efficiency, efficiency being defined as the most expeditious fulfilment of the various plans and objectives of the top leadership. For example, the Soviet authorities are anxious that increased arms spending should not lead to a reduced rate

A frequent contributor to these pages, Professor Nove is now with the University of Glasgow. He is the author of The Soviet Economy *(New York, Praeger, 1961) and other works on the Soviet economic system.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of economic growth. They would like to expand investments in agriculture and in the chemical industry, to continue the gradual improvement in living standards, and at the same time to maintain if not to increase economic aid programs to other countries. All this could perhaps be achieved simultaneously if resources are used to the best advantage, but certainly not otherwise. At the same time these reforms deeply affect the political and personal interests of various groups and individuals, and it is undeniable that the implementation of the measures will give rise to frictions, promotions, demotions, perhaps a widespread disgruntlement with Khrushchev on the part of certain officials. Economics and politics intermingle, as is generally the case.

Chronic Woes of the Economy

To understand the background of the reforms, it is necessary to analyze briefly the principal weaknesses of the planning system which Khrushchev hopes to remedy. These are of several kinds, and tend to overlap and to reinforce one another.

Firstly, the central planners are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the work for which they are responsible. To perform it, they must divide themselves into separate departments. Whether these are called ministries, state committees, divisions within Gosplan or by any other name does not make the task of coordination easier. Production plans must match supply plans, and this for many thousands of items produced by and delivered to many more thousands of enterprises. Yearly production planning and supply planning takes place in a large number of different offices at the center, and also to some extent in the republics and the *sovnarkhozy* (the regional economic administrations established by the 1957 reform). Enterprises face a bewildering situation, receiving production orders from several different branches of the planning organization, supplies from several yet different branches, and plans for labor productivity, costs and profits from still others. It would be miraculous if all these calculations matched. As miracles seldom happen in any economy, they often do not. As a factory director complained:

The department of *Gosplan* which drafts the production program for *sovnarkhozy* and enterprises is totally uninterested in costs and profits. . . . Ask the official in the production program department in what factory it is cheaper to produce this or that product. He has no idea. . . . He is responsible only for allocating production tasks. Another department, uninterested in costs, decides the plan for gross output. A third department or subdepartment, proceeding on the principle that costs must always decline and productivity increase, plans costs, the wages fund and the labor force on the basis of past performance. Allocations of materials and components are planned by numerous other departments. Not a single department of *Gosplan* is responsible for the consistency of these plans.[1]

Before 1957, the appropriate ministry would have been responsible. Nominally, since 1957, the *sovnarkhozy* should have been. Yet, as we shall show, the *sovnarkhozy* have little real authority.

A SPECIAL CASE of the failure to match various portions of the plan relates to the stage at which the long-term plan and current planning must conform to one other —*i.e.*, the implementation of the investment program. Since 1959, long-term ("perspective") planning has been the task of *Gosekonomsovet*—the State Economic Council—while current plans were the responsibility of *Gosplan*. Investment decisions are essentially a consequence of a long-term assessment of the requirements of the economy; a factory takes several years to build. But to make a reality of an investment plan it is necessary to have building materials, labor, machinery, and so on, at the right place at the right time, and this is part of the process of current planning. Notoriously, this became a weak spot, the "question of questions," as Khrushchev put it. There were the problems of choosing the most rational investment variant, of providing necessary finance and supplies, of ordering the necessary machines so that they could reach the new factory in time, and, above all, of ensuring that resources were not "frozen" in projects which could not be completed (the perennial headache of *"raspylenie sredstv,"* the excessive spreading of insufficient resources).

A plentiful critical literature showed that the troubles of investment had several causes. One trouble sprang from the division between *Gosplan* and *Gosekonomsovet*. Several local officials deplored this, noting that when the instructions of these agencies clashed, they gave preference to *Gosplan* because the latter controlled the current situation, *i.e.* supplies.[2] Another trouble concerned errors built into the plan itself. Those in charge at the operational level were often compelled to do the impossible, to complete investment projects for which there just was not enough money or materials provided. Plans were frequently altered; one region's construction plans were changed 500 times within a year![3] But the men on the spot could also be blamed:

---

[1] I. Borovitski, *Pravda*, Oct. 5, 1962.
[2] See V. Surikov, *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, Nov. 10, 1962, p. 5.
[3] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, Nov. 17, 1962, p. 6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

concerned with the fulfillment of their own plans, anxious to obtain more investment funds from the center, they started buildings which they knew they could not finish, diverted resources into secondary purposes, failed to ensure deliveries of investment goods to vital priority projects. One reflection of this situation was a report that in the first ten months of 1962 the investment plan of the Russian republic was fulfilled 89 percent in total, but only 83 percent for "especially important" investments, *i.e.* those on the priority list.[4]

This is but one manifestation of the "sin" of *mestnichestvo,* "localism," which has bedeviled Soviet planning since the 1957 reform. Insofar as they had the power to do so, the *sovnarkhozy* and the republics looked after their own interests to the detriment of "outsiders." A series of warnings and stern orders made no dent in the stream of complaints about failures to deliver, failures to achieve interregional cooperation, a tendency to place regional above all-union interest, and so on. This would have been impossible had the local party officials not been equally guilty of "localism." This, as we shall see, helps to explain some of Khrushchev's actions of November 1962.

Since "localism" is built into the very essence of the 1957 reform, for reasons familiar to every student of the Soviet economy and pointed out by the author of these lines at the time,[5] the central authorities had to recentralize in order to combat this tendency. A number of different steps were taken: new industrial state committees were created; strict limitations were placed on the rights of *sovnarkhozy* to dispose of materials and investment resources, or to take production decisions; and so on. In the end, as an official of the Estonian *sovnarkhoz* pointed out, only 0.2 percent of the industrial output of the republic was planned by its *sovnarkhoz!*[6] But, of course, recentralization added to the burdens and complexities at the center.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 5.

Caption: "Transient Object." (An unfinished factory project is moved from 1961 into 1962.)

—From Krokodil (Moscow), Feb. 10, 1962.

A FURTHER DEFECT in Soviet economic practice, as Khrushchev emphasized at the plenum, was the failure to enforce any standardization in the area of industrial design, or any specialization in the production of component parts and tools. In vividly chosen examples, he contrasted the standardization achieved in capitalist countries with the confusion in the USSR, where the same items were separately designed in different *sovnarkhozy* and enterprises—for instance, different tractors were produced by various factories with no attempt to use interchangeable components, adding to the many headaches of those responsible for spare parts. In this respect too, the 1957 reform must have added to the difficulties. True, the ministries had not done enough in this direction, but at least they had powers to act for an entire industry. The state committees created in and after 1957 lacked authority, and the situation tended to get worse over time.

Finally, there were long-standing unsettled problems at the enterprise level. Some of these were a consequence of inconsistent plans: not even the most intelligent and conscientious director could work effectively if his output plan failed to match his supply allocations. However, a whole range of difficulties arose from misplaced enterprise initiative. Those who imagine the USSR to be some pure totalitarian "command economy," in which enterprises merely carry out orders, have no conception of reality. Enterprises can and do "adapt" the output mix to the measurement of plan fulfillment, they can and do conceal their true potential because rewards are based on plan fulfillment and therefore it pays to have an "easy" plan. Innovation depends greatly on what enterprises choose to do or not to do, and in practice it is often disadvantageous to change either the design of a product or the method of production. In applying for materials allocations or for investment

[5] See "The Soviet Industrial Reorganization," *Problems of Communism,* No. 6 (November-December), 1957.

[6] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta,* Nov. 10, 1962, p. 8.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

funds, there are few incentives to economy and many for waste. Quality, durability, adaptation to user requirements, are not adequately stimulated, and indeed sometimes are actively penalized.

Proposals for Reform

A prolonged discussion of these troubles in the specialized press eventually led to the publication by *Pravda* of the so-called Liberman proposals, stimulating a vigorous debate on the fundamentals of the planning system.[7] The terms of the proposals were these: Enterprises should be guided by an incentive system based on profits, these being calculated in relation to fixed and working capital. By their control over prices, and over the rules governing the incentive fund, the central authorities would ensure that the profitability criterion encouraged a desirable pattern of enterprise behavior. Enterprises would be told what sort of thing to produce (though in this connection the proposals were somewhat vague), but in other respects they would be free to elaborate their own plans and to base their activities on contracts with other enterprises. There would be no plans prescribed from above for wages, labor, productivity or costs. The incentive fund would be used partly to finance decentralized investments, partly for bonuses to labor and management. The rules governing the incentive fund would be decided for several years ahead and would be designed to encourage enterprises to adopt ambitious plans for submission to the planners.

In supporting these proposals, Academician Nemchinov made two further points that logically followed. One was that there should be a charge to enterprises for the use of capital. The other concerned the elimination of the materials allocation system. The state should plan final outputs, while materials and components should be freely bought and sold among state enterprises.[8]

These proposals, if implemented, would have the double effect of encouraging more rational behavior at the enterprise level and removing from the central planners much of the crushing burden of current work. (Of course, this is no coincidence. It is the lack of rational criteria at the local level that makes detailed central planning necessary and decentralization impossible.) However, as critics did not fail to point out, there was a risk involved that the state would not be able to enforce its own priorities, that centralized planning of essentials (which Liberman and Nemchinov both advocate) would be seriously weakened.[9] Still other critics proposed the use of electronic computers, of linear programming methods, either in place of or in conjunction with measures of decentralization to the enterprise level.

It is against this background that Khrushchev put forward his own proposals at the party plenum in November.

The Khrushchev Formula

The essence of these proposals is as follows:

(a) The Communist Party is to be split from top to bottom into industrial (including construction and transport) and agricultural organizations, in order to concentrate its focus on "production" and to ensure that continuous (and not "campaigning") attention is devoted to each of the major sectors of the economy. At the center and in the republics, there are to be presidia covering the whole range of party activity, though the republican presidia are urged not to interfere with the republican industrial and agricultural party bureaus. Below the republican level the separation is to be complete. Thus there are to be two *oblast* (province) party committees, for industry and for agriculture, and incredibly, two separately elected *oblast* soviets (government councils). Below this level there are to be urban industrial party organizations—or in rural areas organizations based on groups of industrial enterprises; quite apart from them, agricultural party committees will coincide with the areas of the agricultural production administrations created by the reforms of the spring of 1962. The *raikomy* (district party committees) are abolished altogether.

(b) The number of *sovnarkhozy* is being sharply reduced by amalgamations. Thus in the Russian republic (RSFSR) there will be between 22 and 24, instead of 67. The total in the country as a whole is probably to be around 40-42, against 103. The reasons—that the existing *sovnarkhozy* are too small and that they break up natural economic regions—are as valid today as they were when the *sovnarkhozy* were created in 1957. It was clear that they were too small from the beginning.

(c) The four Central Asian republics are to be grouped together to form one *sovnarkhoz,* and their four republican Communist parties are to be placed under and within a new Central Asian bureau of the (all-union) party organization.

---

[7] *Pravda,* Sept. 9, 1962. Prof. E. G. Liberman, author of the proposals, is on the staff of the Kharkov Engineering-Economic Institute, where many Soviet plant managers receive training.

[8] *Ibid.,* Sept. 21, 1962.

[9] See in particular the views of A. Zverev, K. Plotnikov and some others, in debates reported in *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta,* Nov. 3 and 10, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(d) Local industry, formerly run by *oblast* and city soviets, is to be placed under the *sovnarkhozy*.

(e) Construction is to be taken out of the hands of *sovnarkhozy* and placed directly under the construction committees of the center (*Gosstroi*) and republics. The patterns of building, lists of investment projects that may be started, and expenditures on investment, will be more highly controlled by the center.

(f) *Gosekonomsovet* is abolished under that name. Its function of long-term planning is to be exercised by a reorganized *Gosplan,* which will be freed from current operational duties. The all-union *Gosplan* is apparently to coordinate plans drafted in the republics and to elaborate a continuous plan for seven years ahead, with a breakdown by years. It is supposed to do this with a small staff and with scientific wisdom. The implementation of plans is to be the duty of a new organization, the All-Union Economic Council, which is no doubt shortly to be endowed with a conventional abbreviation (*Soiuzsovnarkhoz?*). This council is to inherit the current planning powers of *Gosplan* (including, presumably, materials allocation) and the operational decision-making powers of the "current affairs committee of the Council of Ministers." (The functions of the new council are strangely reminiscent of those intended for *Gosekonomkommissiia,* then headed by Pervukhin, in the stillborn reform of December 1956.)

(g) The State Committees for particular industries are to be strengthened, with powers to supervise technical developments, designs, and standardization. It is possible that they will achieve considerable authority in deciding just what types of goods should be produced. They are also to authorize investment projects for their own industrial sectors.

(h) To check on implementation of instructions, and to prevent frauds of many kinds, the "state control" apparatus is to be merged with the party control system, creating a strengthened organization to be headed by the ex-Komsomol and ex-police chief, A. N. Shelepin.

(i) Finally, while the Liberman proposals were not mentioned by name, Khrushchev emphasized the vital role of the profit motive at enterprise level, urged experiments to discover the most effective kinds of success indicators, and announced the drafting of a new "bill of rights" for Soviet industrial directors.

Some Questions and Conjectures

What is one to make of all this? It is hard to imagine how these proposals will work out in practice. For example, great emphasis is placed on party leadership and control, and it is easy to draw the conclusion that the reinforcing of such control is a primary motive of the entire scheme. Certainly this is a reasonable interpretation of the agricultural reorganization: not only are senior party officials to be placed in key positions in republican and *oblast* agricultural committees, but the party's own basic local organs are now (as was envisaged from the first) to coincide geographically with the production administrations.

But for industry things look rather different. *Obkom* secretaries lose by the *sovnarkhoz* amalgamations, since in most cases there will be three or more *oblasti* in the enlarged areas administered by *sovnarkhozy*. Khrushchev suggested that in the case of the large *sovnarkhozy,* a representative of the party organ having jurisdiction over the area as a whole either live in residence or commute as required. But in any case the *obkom* officials will lose power, unless, of course, it is intended to enlarge the *oblasti* to coincide with the new *sovnarkhoz* areas, and no such intention has been announced, at least so far.

Consequently the proposals appear to involve a deliberate reduction in the powers of local party organs, at least in their capacity as *local* organs. The obvious explanation is the struggle against *mestnichestvo*—against the conspiracy of local against central interest, tolerated or even instigated by local party officials. This is particularly clear in the economic amalgamation of the four Central Asian republics, affecting both party and state (economic) organizations. Khrushchev, in the course of his recent tour, must have been struck by the particularism of these republics and must have chosen this means to combat it. It is odd that no "grouping" proposals have yet been made for Transcaucasia and the Baltic states, though a hint of such possibilities may be found in the speech by Mzhavanadze at the November plenum.

The same concern over "localist" abuses is reflected in Khrushchev's attack on local party interference with the judicial process; he wants party officials to conform to centrally-determined regulations and to desist from arbitrary rulings. The splitting of the *obkom* might also be a means to this end.

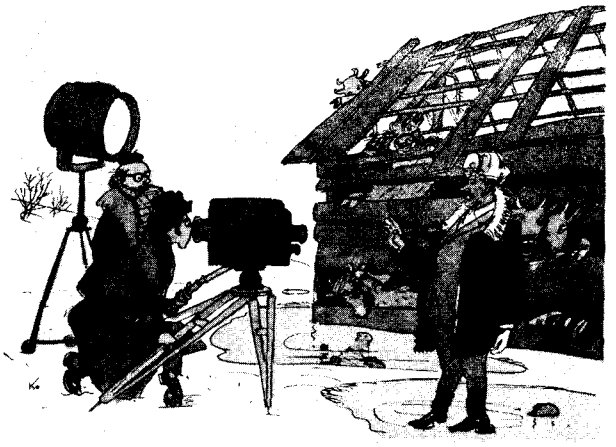
In short, the dominant note of the moment is *centralization*, affecting party *and* state organs. Despite some phrases offered up at the November plenum about the allegedly vast rights of republics in planning (phrases which contrast oddly with the merging of four of these republics into one *sovnarkhoz*), the economic powers of the center appear to be reinforced. How all this will work in practice cannot yet be determined, since so much is unknown, including the actual powers to be

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exercised by "big" *sovnarkhozy*. Yet the direction of regime efforts is obvious, as seen from the centralization of investments, construction and design, and from the operational powers to be vested in the new All-Union Economic Council. Within the confines of the present system, these measures may well lead to some reduction of the confusion which developed out of the 1957 reforms and subsequent *ad hoc* centralization. However, the measures redistribute the vast burden of central planning without radically altering the system, without getting at the roots of present troubles.

CAN THE PARTY'S ROLE be more effective, and if so, how? Here one should distinguish, in the writer's view, between what Khrushchev wishes to happen and what is in fact possible. Khrushchev seems wedded to the idea that planning is a comparatively simple matter, that a relatively few experts can convert party directives from above, and proposals from below, into a coherent plan, which it would then be the task of party and state officials to implement and enforce, exhorting, mobilizing, checking. But life is not really like that. As the experience of the RSFSR has shown in the past two years, the division between planning and implementation of plans is unworkable: the two planning bodies worked in parallel, and inevitably they overlapped with one another. Since the consequences of this set-up in the Russian republic have been extensively criticized in public, it is odd to see the same arrangement reproduced at the all-union level. The division of planning and implementational functions is perhaps the principal administrative weakness of the reform; it can be nothing but a change for the worse.

Nor can the party's role be shaped to Khrushchev's expectations. Party control without overall responsibility means interference and confusion. Party control *with* responsibility would mean the substitution of party administrators for state planners, which would make nonsense of the traditional concept of party control: if a party official is appointed to perform a genuine planning function, he ceases to be a party official and becomes a planner with a party card—and the existing planners already have party cards. In any event, the party hierarchy cannot substitute itself for the vastly complex mechanism of planning and allocation without a big increase in personnel, and Khrushchev emphatically rejects any such increase. Therefore party officials will simply be interfering from the outside, except at the topmost level where the leadership decides economic policy—and where personal interference can lead to the enforcement on the planners of plans which they regard



– Не могли бы вы рассказать об успехах вашего колхоза телезрителям?
– Я лучше о них радиослушателям расскажу!..

Рисунок А. КАНЕВСКОГО

—Couldn't you tell our viewers about the successes of your kolkhoz?
—I'd rather tell radio-listeners about them! . . .

—From Krokodil (Moscow), Feb. 10, 1962.

as irrational (as Khrushchev himself showed in the case of hydro-electric schemes for the Dnieper river). The more party interference there is at points *below* the top level, the less clear will be the lines of subordination and responsibility.

This problem is not, of course, new; it is inherent in the separate existence of party and state hierarchies. The point to be realized is that the latest set of declarations on the subject does nothing to alter the essential elements of the dilemma. On the other hand, the party leadership —intent on efficiency as well as on control—will hardly tolerate administrative chaos. What we may see, then, is either the reinforcement (*de facto*) of the official planning mechanism, or the merging of the party with that mechanism, as indeed is already occurring in the case of the state and party control apparatuses, and to some extent also in the agricultural sector.

YET THIS RAISES other interesting questions. A party identified closely with production, and split into two parts, might risk losing not only its ideological purpose in life but also its unity of aim. Local officials will speak to the people as industrial or agricultural communists, not just as Communists. While there have always been special economic departments within the party hierarchy at various levels, the heads of such departments have been clearly subordinate to the territorial first secretary. In a party split from top to bottom, however, local officials might be tempted to pass on to the center the pressures arising from their own areas of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

responsibility—*i.e.*, they might come to fight for industry *or* for agriculture, or even for one against the other. Is there not some risk that sectional interest would be substituted for territorial interest?

It is remarkable to find the new party statutes—adopted with due solemnity little more than a year ago—so extensively altered so soon. It is also surprising to find that measures adopted just last March to give the party overlords at every level "special" responsibility for agriculture have been displaced—by the proposal to eliminate the overlords (*i.e.*, the "general" first secretaries) themselves! In fact, Khrushchev now criticizes the first secretaries and party organs for concerning themselves too exclusively with agriculture and not enough with industry. What made him change his mind—or has he? Were the March reforms simply intended to strengthen the hands of those high-level planners who were insisting on higher priority for the needs of agriculture? The large increases pledged for investments in fertilizer, in farm machinery and directly in agriculture for 1963, announced at the Supreme Soviet meeting just this December (1962), suggest that this higher priority was achieved. Having achieved it, perhaps Khrushchev has turned his attention to industry and wishes to have a defined section of the party apparatus turn with him.

As a final note, it should be pointed out that all of the current emphasis on central control in general and party control in particular does not mean that Liberman and his ideas are "out". The causes of Liberman are still operative, and he would not have been given *Pravda* as a platform if his views did not have some support in high places. It is in fact obvious, and not only to foreign critics, that most of the difficulties of Soviet planning have not been tackled, let alone resolved. Discussions will continue, further changes will come. Perhaps an immediate cause of the present tightening is the effect on the economy of unplanned increases in military spending. Party organs are useful in enforcing disagreeable priorities, in preventing the dissipation of resources on secondary purposes. Liberman-type reforms do carry with them the risk of such dissipation, and reforms on the lines proposed by him may be merely postponed.

Thus it is still possible that big changes in enterprise powers may be announced shortly. Yet measures expanding the powers of directors have been taken before, with very little effect, and even if new legislation is adopted, it would be prudent to reserve judgement. Only with a radical reform of pricing, and a new system of rewards and success indicators, would it be possible or indeed rational to give more decision-making powers to enterprise directors. Their authority will also be affected by the proposed creation of new "production committees" (which may or may not be as ineffective as the existing "production councils") and by the possible enhancement of the supervisory role of party officials in general, and the new party-state control mechanism in particular. One suspects that the Soviet directors themselves are greatly puzzled about the effect on their position of the reform as a whole. The onlooker, too, can only wait and see.

Meanwhile the economy continues to function, effectively in some sectors (such as steel, oil, cement), less effectively in others. Growth remains rapid, there is neither collapse nor chaos. Perhaps these words are unnecessary, but there is some danger that the vigorous and frank exposures of weaknesses that have been so prominently featured in some Soviet articles and speeches will lead to wrong conclusions. The object of the exposures is to attempt to find a remedy. It does not follow that things are getting worse in any absolute sense.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Peking's Economy: Upwards or Downwards?

By Edwin Jones

FOR A NUMBER of years after the Mao regime came to power, most Western observers were inclined to take a pessimistic view of Communist China's economic development prospects because of the limited resource base of the economy.[1] This estimate subsequently changed as the Communist regime vigorously organized available resources, surmounted various crises, and progressively raised the annual rate of capital construction from $1 billion in 1950-52 to $3.5 billion in 1953-55, $5.7 billion in 1956-57, and $12 billion in 1958-60, with the result that at the end of the first decade the question being debated was no longer whether, but how soon, China would become a major industrial power. Now, however, in view of the mid-1960 collapse of the "Great Leap" and subsequent acknowledgements of critical difficulties in the mainland economy, the analysts are once again revamping their estimates of Communist China's prospects and coming to divergent conclusions as to whether the current crisis spells a permanent reversal for the regime's development program or merely a temporary pause before the resumption of rapid growth.

On assuming power, the Communist regime confidently outlined its plan of economic advance. In the course of a "rehabilitation" period (1950-52) and three Five-Year Plans (1953-67), it would—with aid from the USSR—concentrate investment in heavy industry in order to build a self-sufficient industrial base. Institutional reforms and increased labor effort would secure minimum essential growth in other economic sectors, while a policy of gradual rather than sudden socialization[2] —dictated by the impracticability of mechanizing agriculture until after the establishment of an industrial base—would lessen the danger of political and economic disruption. Only after 1967 would the regime embark on fully socialist industrialization with the aim of becoming a world industrial power in the course of another three to five Five-Year Plans.

Rehabilitation and Progress

Implementing this initial plan, Peking successfully consolidated its administrative control and raised output during 1950-52. Although in 1949 grain production was 15 percent below prewar levels and industries were prostrate, the regime was able by forceful action to stabilize the economy in 1950, to seize and equitably distribute local food surpluses, to reopen rural-urban trade channels, and to provide working capital to industry, with the result that farm and industrial output recovered to prewar levels by 1952. The concurrent

[1] *Cf.* US State Department publication, *United States Relations with China,* Washington D. C., US Government Printing Office, 1949: also, W. W. Rostow *et al., The Prospects for Communist China,* New York, Technology Press of M.I.T. and John Wiley & Sons, 1954.

Mr. Jones is an American economist and student of Chinese affairs. This is his first contribution to Problems of Communism.

[2] Mao Tse-tung, in a mid-1955 speech advocating restoration of the initial timetable for agricultural socialization, set forth this timetable as follows: (1) organization of 50 percent of the peasants by 1957, and 100 percent by 1960, in primitive cooperatives averaging about 25 households and 25 hectares in size and retaining private ownership of land, cattle, and major tools; (2) experimental formation of collectives during 1961-67; and (3) full collectivization over the decade 1968-77.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

completion of land reform consolidated strong administrative control down to the rural village level, while the excuse of the Korean war exigency facilitated the imposition of stringent fiscal and marketing controls over the urban economy. The sharp and ruthless "3-anti" and "5-anti" campaigns of early 1952, directed against public and private peculation, secured strict adherence to the regime's economic regulations and indeed ushered in an amazingly puritanical code of business ethics which, at least until recently, appears to have been observed.

The regime was thus well prepared to begin its first Five-Year Plan in 1953 with a high level of capital construction. It failed to keep up this momentum, however, and by 1955 it realized that its plans were badly out of balance. Grain output rose less than one percent annually during 1953-55, while the 1953 census and registration revealed an unexpectedly high population growth rate of two percent annually. In addition, prolonged and bitter negotiations disclosed that the Soviets were unwilling to extend significant economic credits or even generous credit terms on the military aid China had received from the USSR during the Korean war. Shortages and inflationary pressures sharply limited the growth of industrial output and capital construction over 1953 levels.

In mid-1955 Mao called on the party to overcome these difficulties by accelerating the social revolution.[3] While he asked only for restoration of the initial goals that had been cut back in the final version of the first Five-Year Plan published in July 1955, he stated so clearly the practical urgency and theoretical justification of his proposals, as well as the tactical means of implementing them, that their scope was further expanded in subsequent party discussions. The result was a directive by the Central Committee plenum in October calling for complete organization of the peasants, with as many as possible in second-stage collectives, by 1958. In fact, the following winter-spring campaign of 1955-56 organized 96.3 percent of the peasant population, including 87.8 percent in collectives, as compared with only 14 percent in primitive cooperatives in mid-1955. The program was hailed as a distinctive Maoist contribution to Marxist-Leninist theory in that collectivization without mechanization was found appropriate for the densely-populated Chinese (and Asian) countryside, where it could mobilize underemployed rural labor for productive purposes.

The speedup of collectivization was clearly successful in achieving its major objectives over the 1956-58 period. Despite rural strains and spotty farm production in 1956 and 1957, the disruption that had accompanied the Soviet precedent was absent. The attendant rural development effort produced record harvests of grain and industrial crops in the final year of 1958, demonstrating a capacity to stimulate agricultural growth. Even before that, moreover, the program provided the regime with the necessary resources to effect marked increases in the urban labor force, in wages, industrial output, and capital construction.

ON ANOTHER FRONT, steps were concurrently taken to cope with the population problem. In the fall of 1956 the regime authorized a major countrywide campaign to disseminate knowledge of birth control methods and promote their use by indoctrinating the people in the advantages of family limitation. During 1957 materials were prepared and armies of propagandists were trained, while preliminary work got under way in some major cities, displaying surprising intensity and frankness. In April 1958, however, the promotion committee tacitly admitted in a progress report that the campaign was evoking little public response, and in mid-1958 the drive was abruptly terminated. Regime officials privately explained that the program had been launched prematurely, and that it would be reactivated at about the end of the third Five-Year Plan (1967), when the chances of success would be greater as a result of intervening social and cultural changes. Subsequent public pronouncements by party leaders stressing the advantages of a large population thus were apparently not intended to signal a reversal of policy, but rather to reassure the party cadres that despite the failure to check population growth the possibilities for increasing farm output were adequate to assure that the industrial program could be maintained for a time. This was also substantiated by the fact that contraceptive materials continued to be disseminated and restrictions on abortions further relaxed.

The regime also faced up to the implications of limited Soviet economic and technical aid. In 1956 it redoubled its efforts in education, sharply expanding middle-school and college enrollments, and drew up a 12-year plan for developing an indigenous modern technological capacity by 1967. Also, at the Eighth Party Congress in September 1956, Liu Shao-ch'i outlined the regime's initial proposals for the second Five-Year Plan, envisaging one major change in the existing program. This proposed innovation was a large-scale effort to develop small local industries requiring limited imports or technology, to be accompanied by the necessary decentralization of the administrative structure to implement the program. The program, said Liu, would

[3] Speech to a conference of Communist Party secretaries, July 31, 1955, released by New China News Agency, Oct. 19, 1955.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"accelerate industrial development . . . and facilitate full utilization of our resources," and subsequent discussion made it clear that the regime was attempting to readjust its development program in such manner that industrial growth would not be restricted by the slow increase in Soviet deliveries.

The "Great Leap Forward"

The "Great Leap" program was suddenly set in motion in the summer of 1958, quickly becoming enveloped in an ideological mystique and marked by a vast outpouring of irrational effort and fanciful data. The surrounding circumstances suggested that the regime, having encountered difficulties in implementing its local industry program, had—as in the past—resorted to an ideological drive [4] for the purpose of overcoming resistance to institutional change.

This resistance was rooted in the divisions and delicate balance of the bureaucracy. Economic authority was concentrated in the national ministries, while local organs were limited chiefly to ordinary administrative functions. The regime had installed party members in all the top decision-making posts at the center but had also enabled non-party technicians to play an essential role in the economic ministries, where their services were needed to maintain efficient operations. In the local administrative organs on the other hand, only party members had status, and the stress was on personal responsibility for the fulfillment of assigned economic tasks, which inevitably encouraged local officials to stretch regulations and exaggerate reporting of production results.

The regime initially intended to implement its small-industry program by effecting a reorganization of the local administrative organs, transferring authority and personnel to them, instituting uniform accounting procedures, and exercising technical and efficiency checks over production through continuing supervision by the national ministries. Personnel transfers began to take place at the end of 1957, but the program made little evident progress in the first half of 1958. A vast bureaucratic struggle appeared to be taking place, with the national ministries arguing that reform of the local administrative machinery must precede the transfer of authority so as to maintain the integrity of the planned economy, and the local organs resisting centralized supervision and stressing the importance of flexibility and personal initiative and the costs of excessive red tape and uniformity.[5] Meanwhile there was a rapid improvement in China's resource position in the first half of 1958, reflected in favorable industrial, agricultural, and export developments and in an unexpectedly large budget surplus, and the regime must have been impatient to resolve the impasse and get on with its development program. In June or July, the regime decided the issue in favor of decentralization and gave the local organs broad directives to devise, without national checks, suitable production schemes employing all available local resources.

Soon thereafter, at the end of August 1958, the commune scheme was announced. Although enlargement of the collectives had been under study by the regime, the absence of popular or party preparations for the introduction of the communes and the ensuing confusion as to their precise organization and function suggested much improvisation. The regime, in launching the communes, may have sought to impart to the economic program a greater ideological punch than was being obtained from fanciful production boasts, but it also appeared properly concerned with the need for the prompt establishment in the rural areas of a larger and stronger organization than the collective to distribute equitably the huge labor levies which the local governments were preparing to exact.

In the second half of 1958, the regime proceeded to develop the organizational structure and ideological rationale which were to elicit a massive production effort from the Chinese people up to mid-1960. The communes, averaging over 20,000 persons in size, regimented and communalized peasant life in order to maximize the labor effort available for production purposes. In the cities the wage-earning labor force rose from 24.5 million at the end of 1957 to 45.3 million at the end of 1958, with the number engaged in material production increasing from 9.0 to 25.6 million.

The Price of Economic Folly

The course of the "Great Leap" was anything but smooth. The initial vague concept of the communes and the injunction to local cadres to formulate produc-

[4] Other considerations may also have influenced the regime's decision to launch the Great Leap. The setbacks and uncertainties of 1957 must have made the leadership anxious to restore élan and unity to the party, and the unexpected success of the rural development program of the collectives in the winter of 1957-58 probably created pressures for an intensification and extension of these efforts. Neither of these influences, however, had the urgency to account for the precipitate and ill-prepared steps that were taken.

[5] See Choh-ming Li, *The Statistical System of Communist China*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1962, for a fascinating case study of this struggle in one important national agency.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion plans without central instructions as to specific goals led in the last few months of 1958 to ever wilder ideological claims and increasingly frenzied, bizarre, and idiotic production efforts. Finally, in December, the regime felt compelled to put on the brakes and issued directives scaling down the exaggerated doctrinal claims made for the communes and calling for more realistic production programs. In the spring of 1959 the leadership became involved in a protracted and controversial debate over the basic issue of continuing the policies of the "Great Leap," evidently coming within a hair's breadth of deciding to beat a strategic retreat. Too much had been invested, however, in terms of the regime's resources and prestige, and in August 1959 the decision was taken to continue the program while attempting to make it viable through modifications. The regime drew upon its reserves to push the program forward for another ten months but then, with the nation facing starvation and collapse, finally admitted defeat.

Despite a steady deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations, Soviet capital goods deliveries to China sharply increased during 1959-60, and it may be supposed that Moscow was employing the carrot to induce Peking to turn back from its commune and small-plant folly to a suitably augmented large-plant program. In August 1958 and February 1959 the USSR consented to a sizable increase in Soviet shipments of capital goods for the Chinese program and agreed to take large quantities of Chinese textiles and other consumer goods in repayment. As a result the Soviet deliveries under the "complete plant" program nearly doubled in 1959 [6] and continued in 1960 despite Peking's refusal to alter its basic policies. Sino-Soviet relations became increasingly strained, however, leading to the withdrawal of Soviet technical advisers from China in mid-1960. At the end of 1960 Peking had a large trade deficit with the USSR and was unable to sustain its exports; but Moscow apparently refused to accept a postponement of Chinese deliveries and suspended further Soviet shipments of capital goods, forcing cancellation of most of the Chinese large-plant program.

In agriculture, the consequences of the "Great Leap" were disastrous from the beginning. Uncontrolled consumption in the last half of 1958 dissipated the surplus from the record 1958 food crop, and the harvests of 1959 and 1960 declined precipitously. The commune program stressed drawing rural labor out of farm production activities to engage in development projects, with the result that the women and the aged worked the fields while the young men were organized into construction battalions. Still, because of the greater emphasis on industry and transport, the rural development effort was of limited value or even counterproductive. The low, unvaried food rations of commune members, fixed without relation to local harvest results, caused the peasants to lose interest and initiative in farm production, while the cumbersome size of the communes inhibited effective administrative direction.

IN THE URBAN SECTOR the results were varied but more satisfactory. Capital construction during 1958-60 more than doubled the 1957 rate, and fixed assets of state enterprises nearly doubled over the same period, rising from $25 billion to between $45 and $50 billion. Electric power capacity, nearly all in large plants, increased 2.5 times to exceed 10 million kilowatts in 1960, while power generation nearly tripled to 55 billion kwh. The load capacity of the freight-car park doubled through the addition of new and large cars and, with the receipt of 2,000 mainline steam locomotives from the USSR, supported a more than twofold increase in rail freight tonnage. The outputs of both steel and coal rose sharply, although the official figures may have been somewhat exaggerated in addition to including significant amounts of unusable quality. Steel production was claimed to have tripled to reach 18 million tons in 1960, with one-third of the total produced by Bessemers in small and medium plants, and coal production also tripled to 425 million tons in 1960, with about three-fifths of the total coming from newly-opened small and medium mines.

Net industrial output probably about doubled during 1958-60, heavy industry accounting for about five-sixths of the increase as against only about one-sixth for consumer goods. The local plant program probably absorbed the major share of development inputs, including possibly three-quarters of the increase in the industrial labor force and over half of new industrial capital construction. The local plants, however, contributed less than one-quarter of the increase in industrial output. Large modern industrial plant expanded roughly by half and, though already operated at close to capacity levels in 1957, was utilized still more intensively in 1958-60, often by means of temporary or unsound

[6] Soviet exports to Communist China over the 1950-60 decade were as follows (annual averages in millions of US dollars):

Period	*"Complete Plants"*	*Other Machinery*	*All Other**
1950-52	23	77	371
1953-55	91	104	541
1956-58	197	101	339
1959-60	387	164	335

* Includes primarily petroleum, metals, and military goods.
Source: Statistics published by USSR Ministry of Trade.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

measures. By mid-1960 it was evident that the local plant program had secured a low-quality product of limited usability at very high costs, and that there was no scope for expanding the program in its existing form. The modern plant sector also had to cut back operations to rational levels and make good deferred maintenance, while the prospective curtailment of capital goods imports precluded continued rapid expansion.

The Hard Road Back

The tasks of economic recovery facing the Peking regime in 1961-62 were of staggering dimensions. The first and most urgent problem was that of survival, for the nation was on the verge of famine and complete collapse. The second was to clear away the disruptive distortions of the "Great Leap" and restore rural and urban institutions to something approaching their 1957 character and efficiency. The third was to rehabilitate the diminished prestige of the leadership and reinstill in the people some hope, confidence, and response. Beyond these immediate tasks lay the problem of defining the shape and aims of the development effort of the 1960's.

The highly critical food situation in the 1960-61 food-year (July 1960 through June 1961) required emergency action. The regime halted all nonessential work programs to conserve human energies and cut the higher rations of heavy workers and other favored groups in order to honor a survival ration for all. It halted food exports and paid cash from its limited foreign exchange reserve to speed food imports before the end of the year. It stepped up its public health effort, even drafting the staff and students of some medical schools for a prolonged period of service in identifying and treating serious cases of malnutrition. Although these efforts were vigorous and partially effective, they could not avert widespread outbreaks of malnutrition diseases, particularly edema and hepatitis. The regime's announcement of a slackening in population growth suggests that deaths from all causes rose by five million a year, or about one-third, over the 1957 level, and the actual mortality rate may well have been higher.

The situation improved somewhat in 1961-62. With foreign grain credits and time to organize shipments, the regime increased food imports substantially. The grain harvest rose slightly, and the production of other foods increased even more as a result of the grant of

Economic Indicators for Communist China, 1950-62

Period	Grain Output	Wage Earners	Gross Industrial Output	Capital Construction	Retail Trade	Budget Revenue
	(mil. tons)	*(millions)*	*(billion yuan)**			
Rehabilitation:						
1950		10.2	19.1	1.13	17.1	6.5
1951		12.8	26.4	2.35	23.4	13.0
1952	170	15.8	34.3	4.36	27.7	17.6
Initial Plan Effort:						
1953		18.3	44.7	8.00	34.8	21.8
1954		18.8	52.0	9.07	38.1	26.2
1955	175	19.1	54.9	9.30	39.2	27.2
Collectives:						
1956		24.2	70.4	14.80	46.1	28.7
1957		24.5	78.4	13.83	47.4	31.0
1958	193.5	45.3	117.0	26.70	54.8	41.9
Communes:						
1959	168	45.3	163.0	31.70	63.8	54.2
1960	160	n.a.	194.0	38.50**	64.4	70.0**
Post-"Leap":						
1961	167	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
1962	182	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

* One yuan = approximately $.40.

** Plan figure.

Sources: Figures for grain output are estimates of the US Agricultural Attaché in Hong Kong. All other figures are Chinese Communist data extracted from *Wei-ta Ti Shih-nien* (The Great Ten Years), Peking, 1959, and from subsequent official statements.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

private plots to peasants. The incidence of malnutrition diseases sharply declined, although privation, hunger, and deterioration of discipline continued to be problems.

The current 1962-63 food year is likely to show a more substantial improvement thanks to an estimated increase of 15 million tons in the grain harvest and further increases in the output of other foods. Present Chinese contracts with other countries suggest that grain imports this year will be reduced by over two million tons,[7] and it is also likely that the regime will try to replenish its grain reserves by at least a similar amount; nevertheless, it is already evident on the mainland that more food is becoming available for consumption, partly through selective increases in the most inadequate officially-fixed ration allowances, but mainly through an increased supply of food offered at reasonable prices on the newly-authorized free markets.

Turning to the problem of institutional reform, the regime was fortunate in being able, in the rural sector, to fall back on measures which it had almost adopted in the spring of 1959. Briefly, these envisaged abandonment of the communes in all but name by decentralizing their internal organization and division of authority so as to restore certain essential features of the former system of collectives. In November 1960 the leadership embodied the changes in a comprehensive 12-point directive, subsequently amplified by a 60-point set of commune "draft regulations," and both documents were circulated for discussion in secret cadre sessions. In view of the critical rural situation, however, it was not possible to implement all the proposed reforms at once, and the documents were not immediately publicized.

During the 1960-61 food year the leadership dared do little more than halt work on rural development projects and allocate individual private plots to peasants. But as the food situation eased later in 1961, it proceeded to decentralize authority for farm management down to the level of the production team, a unit smaller than the old collective. It also instituted incentive distribution systems placing increased stress on individual labor contributions and local harvest results, and free markets were opened to allow peasants to dispose of the produce of their private plots. While the private plots increased non-grain food output in 1961, the other reforms were too late to have any significant effect on the 1961 grain harvest. They did, however, secure a satisfactory recovery in the 1962 grain harvest, and the regime has indicated that it intends to consolidate rural organization in substantially its present form.

New Policies in Industry

In the urban areas the regime faced the problem of liquidating the small-plant program, returning the huge mass of redundant and unproductive labor back to the rural villages from which it had been drawn, and rebuilding technical standards and discipline in the remaining urban enterprises. In 1960-61 many obviously unproductive plants were closed, and labor groups which could be easily identified and separated, such as apprentices, were returned to the rural areas. The regime apparently allowed most of the remaining plants to use up their inventories of raw materials, but it halted production subsidies and in many cases stopped supplying materials that were scarce or had previously been imported. In addition, many plant managements were evidently required to find customers for their products at prices reflecting actual costs—necessitating cost reduction and/or shifts in production—or to close down when their resources were exhausted. Most of the small plants were unable to meet the regime's new requirements, although some managed to survive by drastic retrenchment and shifts to consumer goods production. Thus, small plant closures continued and may even have accelerated in late 1961 and in 1962.

The regime further drew up an ambitious program in 1962 for returning additional labor to the rural areas, but by then the task of determining who should go and who should remain had become far more complicated. Elaborate criteria were established for this purpose, but the program encountered increasing opposition in the spring and summer, and the regime now seems to have dropped direct compulsion for enforcing compliance and to be relying instead on economic pressures exerted through withdrawal of official ration privileges. If a person's urban ties are such that he can find a new job on his own or be supported by relatives, he is allowed to remain. Consequently, it appears that the number of urban workers actually returned to the rural areas remains far below the planned figure, and the regime has indicated that this will be a continuing major program in 1963.

For the large-plant sector, the Peking leadership has forcefully enunciated policies aimed at restoring technical discipline, but there is little evidence as yet to show what practical results, if any, have been achieved. It has called for the appointment of technicians to the top

[7] The following table shows Communist China's net grain imports for the last two and current food years (in millions of tons):

Year	*July-Dec.*	*Jan.-June*	*Total*
1960-61	0	2.7	2.7
1961-62	2.8	3.2	6.0
1962-63 (est.)	1.4	2.0-2.5	3.4-3.9

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

echelons of plant management, for consultation with them on all important production decisions, for avoidance of party interference prejudicial to the integrity of the accounting system or to technical operations, and for safeguards to protect technicians against being blamed for all mishaps or for contradicting party members' opinions. These policies represent a clear reaction away from the denigration and misuse of technical personnel under the "Great Leap," when they were kept in low-level positions under political managers, were not consulted on the formulation of policy but only its implementation, and were usually blamed for anything that went wrong—with obviously injurious effects on their morale and willingness to give forthright advice.

Efforts to Revive Morale

The regime is probably sincere in its new policies, and the restoration of major plants to the control of national ministries in 1961 has undoubtedly strengthened its ability to exert continuing pressure to put them into effect. The leadership of course does not intend to relinquish economic decision-making power from the hands of party functionaries, and it may be some time before an atmosphere of trust and toleration is regained, permitting technicians to play an effective role.

It is unlikely that the Mao leadership can succeeed in fully resurrecting the former élan of Chinese economic development, and even partial success in this direction will probably be contingent upon restoration of secure living conditions and the articulation of a credible development policy. Nevertheless, with this objective in view, the regime has been endeavoring since 1960 to refurbish its image in the public mind and to extricate the leadership from major responsibility for the "Great Leap" debacle. Thus, while it admits to having taken somewhat overambitious, though well-intentioned, decisions to speed China's growth, it argues that these decisions were undermined mainly by disastrous crop weather, Soviet refusal of aid, and defective implementation by low-level cadres. In regard to the last, Peking has claimed that bumbling fanatics in the lower echelons exceeded orders and that timid sycophants failed to report disaster to their superiors.

To demonstrate its *bona fides,* the regime has sacked officials as high as provincial governors for corruption or failure, has curtailed the authority of local party satraps, halted labor and indoctrination demands on the people, rehabilitated many "rightists" from disgrace or released them from concentration camps, assured students and intellecutals of respect for expertise, encouraged dissent and discussion on non-political or local matters, and greatly relaxed petty regulation and individual supervision. These steps appear to have had a measure of success judging from the fact that recent refugees from the Chinese mainland, though openly disillusioned and resentful, rarely focus their antagonism on Mao and the leadership. This suggests that if the current trend towards improved living conditions continues and the leadership in 1963 succeeds in reformulating a coherent development policy, there may be a marked revival of public confidence in and responsiveness to the regime in the next year or two.

Future Development Policy

Although the Peking leadership has yet to come forward with a comprehensive long-term development policy for the 1960's, recent public statements and reports of local developments define the principal areas of concern and suggest the general shape the program is likely to take. The regime appears first of all to regard the third Five-Year Plan (1963-67) as a hiatus in which the agricultural base of the economy must be shored up against the pressures of population growth. It now concedes that this diversion of resources into agriculture and the loss of Soviet aid will delay the attainment of a self-sufficient industrial base and an independent technological capacity, originally scheduled for 1967, until 1972. This delay and a new "realistic" regard for development difficulties have also led the regime to postpone the attainment of parity with the major industrial powers for a decade beyond the initial target period of 1982-92.

China's population dilemma, which has concerned the regime ever since the 1953 census, is simply stated. All previously modernized societies at least quadrupled their populations in the process, but because death rates declined only gradually with the less effective mortality controls formerly prevailing, they were able to wait for the third or fourth generation, with changed social values and attitudes, to accept lower fertility and thus restabilize the population. Communist China, with limited farm resources, cannot allow its population to much more than double, but if it is to stabilize growth at that level with present-day mortality controls, fertility would have to be lowered in the first generation—an unprecedented feat in demographic history.

Mao told Viscount Montgomery in September 1961 that the regime had concluded from its 1956-58 birth-control campaign that simple persuasion was not very effective—an observation with which few demographers would quarrel—but that the regime, in the light of certain undefined demographic developments that had

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

occurred under the social stresses of the past few years, was now hopeful that slow but steady progress could be achieved by selective social pressures. These remarks suggest that the question has been under continuing study by the Peking government with recognition of the urgent need to develop a workable program.

Mainland refugees testify that, although little has yet been done in the conservative rural areas and inland cities accounting for the bulk of the population, a major birth control effort has been going on in the more cosmopolitan coastal cities, chiefly among young adults. The program has been comprehensive, seeking to encourage later marriages so as to shorten reproductive life, the spacing of births at longer intervals through contraception and abortion, and termination of reproductive life at an early date through sterilization. That the campaign has had some effect seems evident from the fact that abortion and sterilization operations have reportedly become quite common at least in some urban coastal hospitals. These efforts clearly do not promise to have any quick braking effect on total fertility, but they represent at least a practical beginning. The experience of other societies shows that fertility declines are not uniform, but rather appear first in certain groups and then spread to others. Whether the Chinese Communist regime can speed up this process sufficiently to meet its own especially urgent requirements is highly uncertain, but it seems to be following the best and perhaps most effective course open to it.

Priority for Agriculture

With no quick relief from population pressures in sight, the Peking regime has already conceded that the third Five-Year Plan must be heavily oriented towards agricultural development. In so doing, however, it has indicated that the assignment of top priority to the development of agriculture over the next five years is not intended to exclude a significant degree of industrial growth, but rather is designed to impart an initial impetus to the farming sector and restore better balance in the overall long-term program of economic development. The regime is taking Japanese agriculture as a model and seeking to promote more intensive cultivation and higher yields through irrigation, fertilization, and mechanization. It is stressing a flexible and selective program with special emphasis on areas around major cities having convenient transport and industrial services and areas promising high returns per unit of investment.

The costs of the agricultural development program can only be guessed. Having spent $4 billion on major water conservancy projects in the past decade, the regime will probably spend not much more—say $6-8 billion—for the same purpose over the next decade. China's indicated fertilizer needs of about 15 million tons annually will require a plant investment of about $3 billion in the next decade. Mechanization goals are vague, but an investment of $6-8 billion would be reasonable in relation to requirements and Chinese machine industry capacity. (This amount might correspond to $3-4 billion in US terms owing to lower American resource costs for machinery and would compare with a US farm machinery inventory of $14 billion in 1959.)

A program of this scope would probably involve increasing the Peking government's overall investment in agriculture (apart from local peasant investment) over the next decade to three to four times that of the last decade. Agricultural investment, however, is unlikely to exceed a quarter of total capital construction even if the latter does not regain the levels of 1958-60 in the next decade. Import costs of the program may be calculated at 10-20 percent of export earnings, assuming the regime can maintain average annual exports over the next decade at the 1958-60 rate. (These import costs would rise somewhat if, as is likely, fertilizer plant construction lags and resort must be made to fertilizer imports. The entire increased requirement projected linearly over the next decade, amounting to 75 million tons, could be imported at a cost of $3 billion, or 15 percent of projected export earnings, as compared with calculated imports of $1-1.5 billion in equipment for fertilizer plant construction.)

This program is probably within the means at Communist China's disposal and would provide inputs adequate to accommodate a two-percent annual population growth over the next decade. The regime, however, may have difficulty in providing the requisite technical guidance and peasant incentives to secure the efficient utilization of these inputs. Its record in this respect has not been particularly good in the past decade, and the requirements of the next ten years are considerably greater. This suggests that the regime will not score any dramatic success in raising farm output in this period and that the narrow margin over minimum food requirements will continue to be a major concern.

With major natural resources, a large industrial labor force, and the necessary political strength to mobilize domestic savings, Communist China has all the ingredients for rapid industrial expansion—save modern technology. Like all underdeveloped countries, it has had to depend on imports of industrial goods and technical services as an essential complement to domestic development resources, and the record of the past

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

decade suggests that the slow initial growth and subsequent decline in these imports was the major factor that impeded and, in the end, halted industrial growth.

Problems of Industrial Recovery

Industrial output, oriented towards heavy industry, collapsed after mid-1960 and may have fallen by half, back to the 1957 level. The failure can be ascribed in large part to technological inadequacies, which precluded success in the small-plant program and curtailed large-plant expansion in conjunction with the reduction of industrial imports caused by the forced cessation of agricultural exports. The disintegration of the small and large-plant programs greatly reduced the market for investment goods and idled much of China's heavy industrial plant. The regime tried during 1961-62 to re-orient industrial output towards farm producers' goods, consumer goods based on industrial raw materials, and exports, but this effort brought limited relief owing to the lack of industrial flexibility and to restricted demand in these sectors.

Restoration of industrial imports is probably an essential prerequisite to significant industrial recovery within the next decade. However, Peking's balance of payments will already be burdened over the next three years by the $500 million of accumulated debt to the USSR and by current obligations of over $200 million on outstanding grain import contracts and short-term grain credits, even assuming that grain imports are halted after 1962-63. Moreover, the continued aggravation of the Sino-Soviet dispute suggests that the Chinese Communist leadership has written off any chances of restoring close economic relations with the Soviet European bloc. Peking, however, is now exploring the possibilities of securing industrial imports from Japan and Western Europe and of obtaining credits in the initial years so as to permit the immediate start of such imports. If credits are granted, China could probably achieve substantial industrial recovery within the next several years; without them industrial growth is likely to remain retarded until after 1965. In any event, it is unlikely that industrial imports can be brought back up during the third Five-Year Plan to the annual rates of 1958-60, suggesting that the Peking regime will have to accept a significantly lower level of capital construction and a more modest rate of economic growth than was achieved in 1958-60.

For the longer term, Communist China counts on its education program to develop an independent technological capability. The accelerated expansion of higher education which began in 1956 raised the number of college graduates during 1960-62 to 473,000, exceeding the total for the previous decade and bringing the number of college graduates in the population to about 1.1 million. These recent graduates, however, were inadequately trained, and the regime has found it difficult to employ them suitably in the present dislocated state of the economy. Accordingly, emphasis in higher education is now being shifted from numbers to quality by such measures as closing substandard schools, lengthening undergraduate study programs to five years, reducing extracurricular distractions, and being much more selective in accepting applicants from the now greatly increased number of middle-school graduates. The education program over the next decade seems likely to produce two to three million college graduates with considerably better training than those of recent years. By the end of the decade Communist China may have a greater number of college graduates with training in engineering and physical sciences than the United States had as of 1940, but they will of course be younger and more inexperienced than their US counterparts.

TAKING A BROADER VIEW of the current Chinese scene, it seems that the Peking regime is now aware that Communist China has reached a new stage in its development. The great social revolution of the 1950's broke through the local centers of power and the "crust of custom" and concentrated China's resources under Peking's control. The regime's ideological fervor, its repeated successes and vast promises, led all groups of the population to bow to its will and rendered the institutions of society malleable in its hands. Rapid social change played an essential role in achieving the progress of the 1950's, but the regime seems to recognize that the methods hitherto employed have now outlived their usefulness, that the great problems confronting it in the 1960's are no longer tractable by resorting to ideological drives and social upheaval, but require stable institutions and measured progress for their successful solution.

Many observers believe that Peking's recent display of a more rational approach to its economic problems is a case of "when sick, the devil a saint would be," and that the Chinese Communist regime cannot long restrain itself from revolutionary solutions and learn how to use the great power of the party discreetly and selectively. If this is true, of course, the regime will almost certainly have less success in resolving its manifold difficulties than its present planning might suggest.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Latin America

By Daniel Tretiak

EDITORS' NOTE: Recent months have brought fresh evidence of increasing turmoil generated in the world's Communist parties by the Sino-Soviet dispute. Having examined the impact of this dispute on the Indian CP (see "The Indian CP Between Moscow and Peking," by Harry Gelman, November-December 1962), we now turn to Latin America. In the article below, Mr. Tretiak deals with Sino-Soviet competition in that part of the world, with particular emphasis on the recent Cuban crisis.

APART FROM ITS DIRECT and far-reaching impact on East-West relations, the Cuban crisis of October-November 1962 has brought sharply into focus the emergence of Latin America as still another area of serious policy conflict between the Soviet Union and Communist China. The exacerbation of Moscow-Peking relations as a consequence of the events in Cuba has already been made evident by open confrontations of the Chinese and Soviet positions at the Bulgarian, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and Italian party congresses during November and December, as well as by a scathing Chinese Communist propaganda barrage intimating that the Soviet backdown in Cuba was tantamount to a Munich-style appeasement of "US imperialism."

The Cuban crisis, however, only catalyzed and thrust dramatically into the limelight Sino-Soviet divergencies over Latin American strategy that have become more and more apparent as the Chinese in the past several years have pushed forward a concerted effort—via propaganda, front activity, exchange visits by various types of delegations, etc.—to win friends in Latin America and, in particular, to exert influence on the Latin American Communist movements. Patently more sanguine than the Russians about the effectiveness of "national liberation struggles" on the Cuban model, the Chinese have tried hard to convert Latin American Communists to the Maoist school of uncompromising revolutionary militancy and primary reliance upon armed struggle, as opposed to the more resilient and pragmatically cautious strategy of Communist advance championed in recent years by the Khrushchev leadership.

Mr. Tretiak has graduate degrees from the Universities of Arizona and Harvard and is presently engaged in research in Hong Kong on a grant from the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii (Honolulu).

Unity and Discord

So far as basic Communist objectives in Latin America are concerned, there is little reason to doubt that the Chinese and Russians are generally in accord. Both partners aim, above all, at undermining and destroying United States power and influence throughout the area; hence, they seek to weaken Latin American regimes that pursue policies favorable to US interests and to discourage the acceptance by those regimes of American aid tendered, for example, through the "Alliance for Progress" program and the services of Peace Corps volunteers. They also share a common long-range interest in promoting the collapse of right-wing Latin American governments and their ultimate replacement by Communist-oriented regimes like Castro's in Cuba—though the Chinese doubtless envisage regimes which will look to Peking rather than Moscow for revolutionary guidance. Finally, since Cuba has become an invaluable springboard for international Communist activity in the rest of Latin America, the Chinese and Russians both seek to mobilize Latin American Com-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

munist and left-wing forces in support of the Cuban revolution and thereby to exert pressure on the governments of the area to refrain from backing US actions against Castro.

But while broadly agreed on their objectives in Latin America, Moscow and Peking have clearly come into conflict over key issues of Communist strategic and tactical policy, especially with regard to support of national liberation movements and methods of effecting eventual Communist conquest of political power. In general, the present Soviet leadership has been in favor of employing more flexible and cautious means, while the Chinese—invoking the Cuban and, by inference, their own revolution as models—have contended that the only sure road to Communist victory in areas like Latin America lies in promoting armed revolutionary struggle. In advocating this strategy, Peking is not simply mouthing mere rhetoric. For, apart from being conditioned by their own revolutionary experience to think predominantly in terms of armed struggle, the Chinese Communists have recognized—not without justification—that in Latin America the use of military force to acquire and retain power is still very much in vogue, whereas democratic processes have frequently failed. From Bolivar to Castro, Latin American experience has nurtured the idea of military action as the most effective way to obtain swift political results.

This is not to imply that the Russians, in prescribing a generally more flexible and less militant political strategy for the Latin American Communist movements, have been less discerning than the Chinese in their estimate of Communist potentialities in the area. Some of the Latin American Communist parties—for example, those of Chile and Brazil in recent years—have found it possible to work effectively within the framework of parliamentary democracy.[1] Furthermore, it seems highly improbable that the United States, in the light of what transpired in Cuba after Castro's assumption of power, would have passively permitted—or would henceforth permit—another Castro-type revolution to develop elsewhere in Latin America, or that such a revolution could possibly succeed without overt Soviet support. Indeed, the determined US response to the stationing of Soviet IRBM's in Cuba paradoxically vindicated one of the key premises of Khrushchev's past adherence to a cautious Latin American strategy: namely, that the Soviet Union, however anxious to weaken the US position in Latin America and however subject to Chinese pressures, could not push the US too far without grave risk.

China's Latin American Effort

In spite of the evident importance of Latin America in the minds of Peking's strategists, the Chinese Communists for obvious reasons have only just begun to rival the Russians as an alternate source of Communist influence in the area. The Soviet Union, much earlier in the field, enjoys full diplomatic representation in a number of Latin American capitals and can utilize its embassies or legations as a direct means of exercising guidance and discipline over the local Communist movements, whereas Peking has thus far won formal state recognition by only one Latin American government—the Castro regime in Cuba. The Chinese are probably hopeful of eventual political changes elsewhere in Latin America—possibly in Brazil, Chile, or Guiana—that will permit them to widen their diplomatic representation, but for the present the Chinese embassy in Havana represents Peking's sole—albeit extremely useful—official Latin American outpost.

In the field of trade also, Communist China's relations with Latin America still remain in the embryonic stage. Again, only Cuba has entered into regular trade arrangements with China, besides receiving Chinese technical assistance. There have also been intermittent Chinese trading deals with Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay[2] (Argentina, for example, has been a minor supplier of wheat to Communist China during the Chinese agricultural crisis), but commercial relations between China and these countries have not been put on a regular basis despite professed interest on both sides in doing so. The only other evidence of progress has been Chile's action in permitting the establishment of a permanent Chinese trade mission in Santiago—the only one in South America. The protracted economic crisis in Communist China has undoubtedly hampered efforts to de-

[1] Though technically illegal, the Brazilian CP has continued to wield considerable political influence through working relations with other parties and activity within the National Liberation Front, in addition to remaining active and politically powerful in the Brazilian labor movement. In Chile, the Communists are a legal party and share active control of the Popular Action Front (FRAP), in which they are allied with the Socialists and other leftist groups. (The FRAP is presently headed by the Secretary-General of the Communist Party, Luis Corvalán.) The party is also influential in the Chilean labor movement.

[2] See article by Fu Ying in *Shih-chieh Chih-shih* (Oct. 3, 1953), translated in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* (SCMP), Hong Kong, U.S. Consulate General, No. 680 (Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1953), p. 40; also SCMP No. 827 (Nov. 13-15, 1954), p. 9; Corporation for Economic and Industrial Research, *Soviet Bloc Latin American Activities and Their Implications for US Foreign Policy*, a report for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Study No. 7 (Washington DC, US Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 752.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

velop trade with Latin America, but when and if the crisis eases to the extent of enabling China to export light industrial products and some capital goods, Peking may be expected to renew its attempt to find markets in the Latin American countries, as well as sources of supply for commodities needed by the Chinese economy (*e.g.*, especially oil[3]).

While the Chinese have thus had scant success in developing inter-governmental and trade ties with Latin America, they have actively employed other means of projecting their influence into the area. Peking directs a constant and heavy barrage of propaganda via radio broadcasts in Spanish, Portuguese, and Quechua, and these are supplemented by the activities of an NCNA (New China News Agency) office operating in Havana and by the dissemination in Latin America of Spanish-language periodicals and movies presenting a glowing picture of China's progress under communism. To offset the absence of diplomatic relations, Peking also has sponsored the establishment of a semi-official China-Latin America Friendship Association, which serves as its main instrument in developing and maintaining contacts with Latin America, and which has links with a number of unofficial counterpart organizations already functioning in various countries: *e.g.*, the Chile-China Cultural Institute (headed by a non-Communist) and the Mexico-China Friendship Association, whose president, Ricardo Rosas Arciniega (also non-Communist), visited Peking last fall on the occasion of the anniversary of the Chinese People's Republic. These groups, by disseminating Chinese propaganda materials and organizing public gatherings to hear reports on developments in China, play a valuable part in winning Latin American sympathy for Chinese Communist views.

THE PEKING REGIME has further reinforced these activities by extending invitations to influential Latin American political figures and others to visit Communist China, where they have been welcomed by top Chinese Communist leaders, shown selected evidences of China's economic and social progress, and had impressed upon them Chinese sympathies for and identification with Latin American anti-imperialist aspirations. Such visits have by no means been restricted to persons with open pro-Communist sympathies; in fact, there appears to have been a marked decrease in the number of avowed Latin American Communists travelling to China during the past two years—very possibly as a result of Soviet pressures brought to bear on the Latin American Communist parties in connection with the Sino-Soviet dispute. The flow of non-Communist Latin American visitors to China, however, has continued.

Among the more prominent Latin American political figures who went to China prior to 1961 were former Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas; the present Cuban Minister of Industry and right-hand Castro lieutenant, Ernesto Guevara; and Chilean Socialist Party leader Salvador Allende. Visitors in 1961 included Vice-President Joao Goulart (now President) of Brazil, Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos, Bolivian Senator Federico Alvarez Plata, and Chilean Senator Faivovich. During 1962 the Peking regime played host to parliamentarians from Chile and Ecuador and to the wives of Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan of Guiana and Brazilian peasant leader Francisco Juliao. The fact that some of these 1962 visitors returned home with laudatory comments on the Chinese commune system seems to indicate that Peking was still having some success in impressing Latin American guests with the achievements of Chinese Communist agriculture. In other instances, the visits seem to have been of little political benefit to the Chinese: for instance, despite Goulart's expressions of Brazilian friendliness towards the Chinese People's Republic during his 1961 visit, Brazil has not recognized the Peking regime and in 1962 opposed China's admission to the United Nations and UNESCO.

Whenever the opportunity has been extended to them, the Chinese have reciprocated Latin American visits to China by sending various types of delegations to Latin America. This sort of contact has naturally been most extensive with Castro's Cuba, which has been visited by Chinese government and Communist Party officials, by youth, trade union, and cultural delegations, and by technical and military missions sent to assist in Cuba's economic development and military program. Less frequently, Chinese delegations have been received in other Latin American countries. Ch'u T'u-nan, presently the head of the China-Latin America Friendship Association, led a cultural delegation to Latin America in 1956, and the present vice-president of the Association, Chou Erh-fu, headed another visiting Chinese group in 1958. Both these delegations had contacts during their tours with Latin American government officials, local political figures (including Communists), and members of resident Chinese communities. (It was as a result of Ch'u's 1956 visit that the Chile-China Cultural Institute and Mexico-China Friendship Association were established.)

[3] According to a British analyst of Chinese Communist affairs, "oil has probably been an important consideration in Chinese relations with countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America . . ." W.A.C. Adie, "China, Russia and the Third World," *China Quarterly* (London), No. 11, July-September 1962, p. 201, f.n. 6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1959 and 1962 Chinese journalist groups toured several Latin American countries; in 1960 Liu Ch'ang-sheng, a member of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, visited Chile; and in 1962 a Chinese trade union delegation attended the national congress of the Chilean central labor organization (CUTCh), also visiting Cuba, Ecuador, and Brazil.

China's Challenge to Soviet Influence

Just how successful this Chinese Communist proselytizing has been in gaining support for Peking's attitudes and policies within the Latin American Communist movements is difficult to measure precisely. It is clear, however, that the Mao regime's persistent advocacy of the Chinese "path" of armed revolutionary struggle as the most effective means of advancing the Communist cause in Latin America and its insistence upon unreserved and united Communist-bloc support of such struggles have attracted enough of a following among the more militant sections of the Latin American Communist parties to pose an open challenge to the continued predominance of Soviet influence. The outlines of this challenge were already in evidence at the 1960 Moscow conference of 81 Communist parties, where members of the Argentine, Chilean, Colombian, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan delegations reportedly sided with the Chinese in opposition to certain Soviet policy positions.[4]

The interaction of two factors, in particular, appears to have contributed significantly to the growth of Chinese influence in the Latin American CP's. The first has been the tendency in many of these parties—especially those which have recently suffered political setbacks as in Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, and Peru—towards growing disillusionment with Moscow's predilection for parliamentary methods of acquiring power. The second factor was the tremendous psychological impact of the success of Castro's revolution in Cuba—a revolution which in its use of guerrilla warfare and other features seemed consciously inspired by Maoist precepts, and with which the Chinese Communists had proclaimed their solidarity almost from the start.[5] The Cuban victory had the effect of persuading many Latin American Communists that their best hope of achieving political power did indeed lie—as Peking has claimed—in imitating the Chinese and Cuban examples of revolutionary armed struggle. Such views were expressed by Latin American Communist leaders who visited China in 1959-1960 and made highly-publicized statements praising both the Chinese and Cuban experiments.

To a large extent, no doubt, these statements were inspired by conviction, but they may also have been intended to pressure the Soviets into a more positive attitude toward revolutionary activity in Latin America. In any case, all the appeals for a more aggressive policy fell on deaf ears in Moscow, and the Soviets failed to change their basic position. Eventually, the orthodox Latin American leaders, apparently under Soviet pressure, fell into line; excepting the Cubans, their visits to China became less frequent during 1961-62, and their pro-Chinese statements abated as well. They now continue working within the democratic framework and oppose, in spite of earlier temptations, the Chinese techniques of civil war as proper political tactics.

A good example of this accommodation to Soviet views was the apparent about-turn of the Chilean Communist Party Secretary General, Luís Corvalán. After his return from China in 1959, he was reported to be very much impressed by Chinese recommendations for radical Communist action in Latin America. In March of last year, however, he was undoubtedly referring to more recent Chinese pressures when he declared:

> **It is a great merit of the [Chilean party's] Central Committee that it knew how to maintain the necessary revolutionary firmness when faced by various complex problems. For example, in relation to the peaceful road, the party was the object of outside pressures and had to face more than one situation of fact engendered by elements *within* [author's italics] the people's and workers' movement. From all this the party has come out ahead.[6]**

The Chilean party leadership thus continues to toe the Soviet line, but probably not without some hesitation and possibly even internal opposition. That there is reluctance within the Chilean party to give full and explicit support to the Kremlin leaders became apparent when the plenum of the party Central Committee, after the 22nd CPSU Congress, failed to condemn the Albanian regime or criticize the Chinese party—this despite the fact that at the Moscow Congress Secretary-General Corvalán, along with the other Latin American Communists, had supported Khrushchev's criticism of Enver

[4] *New York Times,* November 25, 1962, p. 1.

[5] Hailing Castro's revolutionary struggle in Cuba in the summer of 1958, a Chinese Communist press comment declared: "The U.S. backyard has become a volcano . . . But US imperialism will not voluntarily withdraw; the Latin American people . . . can only shake off imperialist enslavement and crush its aggression by firm struggle. Anti-American flames are burning everywhere in Latin America. The tide of national independence will not be checked . . ." See SCMP, No. 1830, August 12, 1958, p. 49.

[6] *El Siglo* (Santiago, Chile), March 14, 1962, and *Cuba Socialista,* (Havana), Vol II, No. 10, (June 1962), p. 77.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hoxha and the Chinese leadership.[7] There has also been evidence of party dissension in Brazil, where shortly after the CPSU Congress several prominent party members were expelled for having "launched a systematic attack against the unity and discipline of the Communist movement."[8]

Cuba and the Sino-Soviet Conflict

It is in Cuba, however, that the conflict between Soviet and Chinese policy has been most clearly reflected. The recent agreement between President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev on the withdrawal of Soviet offensive weapons from Cuba not only brought forth public disagreement between Castro and Moscow, but also lined up Cuba and Communist China in common opposition to both the United States and the USSR. By steadfastly refusing to permit international inspection of missile sites on Cuba territory, Castro succeeded in thwarting full implementation of the Soviet-American accord on the settlement of the Cuban crisis. In this stand, as well as in the matter of his now well-known five counterdemands, Castro was vigorously and publicly supported by the Chinese, who went as far as accusing the Soviets of having perpetrated another "Munich" by giving in to American demands. The Chinese leadership has thus served notice that it will publicly oppose the Soviet policy of caution in Latin America and what it considers Khrushchev's opportunism and betrayal of revolutionary interests. Since China is unable to supplant Soviet support of the Cuban economy, Castro must be expected to compromise his disagreements with Moscow, but the new Sino-Cuban ties already constitute a special element in the polycentric Communist world.

This development received its most concrete expression during the Cuban crisis, but it has been in the making for some time. Throughout the sharpening Sino-Soviet conflict, Moscow has been conspicuously unsuccessful in obtaining outright backing from Fidel Castro on such vital matters as condemnation of the Albanian leadership and the cult of the personality, or even explicit concurrence with the Soviet view of the future course of "national liberation" movements in Latin America. It is true that the Cubans have not followed the Chinese lead in printing Enver Hoxha's diatribes against Khrushchev, but they have plainly shown their unwillingness to join in the condemnation of the Albanian leaders or to criticize Peking for supporting Albania.

What is more, the official Cuban press has been giving steady, if somewhat limited, coverage to Albania, particularly to Albanian references to Cuba.[9] Even comments by Enver Hoxha have appeared.[10] Furthermore, trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries have remained normal:[11] shortly after Moscow broke diplomatic relations with Tirana, the Cubans received in Havana the new Albanian ambassador, Josif Pogace.[12] An exhibition of Albanian products has recently been held in Havana, and Albanians have been freely invited to attend international meetings in Cuba. One of the high points of Cuban-Albanian amity was reached quite recently when Albanian students in Peking visited the Cuban Embassy to express their support of the joint Cuban-Chinese stand during the missile crisis. According to the official New China News Agency, the representative of the Albanian students, Niko Konini, declared on that occasion that "the Albanian people, taught by the Albanian Labor Party headed by Enver Hoxha, were ready at all times to fight against US imperialist war schemes and would do everything in their power to support the Cuban revolution." "Amidst the shouting of 'Hoxha-Fidel!' and 'Albania-Cuba!'", the NCNA report continued, "Albanian students and Cuban diplomats hugged one another."[13] Additionally, a group of Cuban agricultural workers recently arrived in Albania to begin training there, in fulfillment of the Cuban-Albanian technical cooperation accord. The Cubans were warmly greeted upon arrival in the Albanian port of Durres.[14]

In other fields, too, the Cubans have demonstrated at least qualified support for Chinese policy. Thus, in April 1962, their press for the first time carried Chinese protests against alleged Indian border incursions, even though until then Havana had appeared favorably inclined toward India's role as a neutral nation.[15] They also have published articles extolling the achievements of the Chinese communes.[16] And even more important, after avoiding the topic for a long time, they finally condemned Yugoslav revisionism in May of last year—

[7] For a report on the Plenum, see *El Siglo*, November 30-December 2, 1961.
[8] *Ibid.*, January 16, 1962.

[9] See *Noticias de Hoy* (hereinafter *Hoy;* Havana), January 3 and 10, 1962.
[10] *Ibid.*, January 25, 1962.
[11] The current Cuban-Albanian trade pact was signed last April in Havana by the Albanian Minister of Foreign Trade. *Hoy*, April 5, 1962.
[12] *Ibid.*, December 15, 1961.
[13] November 7, 1962; also SCMP, No. 2858 (Nov. 13, 1962), pp. 22-23.
[14] See *Jen-min jih-pao*, Nov. 22, 1962, p. 4; and *Revolucion* (Havana), Nov. 23, 1962, p. 3.
[15] *Hoy*, April 26, 1962.
[16] *Ibid.*, February 22 and July 21, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this only shortly after Khrushchev, while visiting Bulgaria, had made new conciliatory gestures toward Tito.[17] Furthermore, exchanges of state and party visits between Havana and Peking have been proceeding regularly throughout the period of the Sino-Soviet conflict, and last October Cuban representatives figured prominently at the CPR anniversary celebrations in Peking.

IN SUM, relations between Cuba and China are close and cordial, and certainly more than simply correct. It is now pertinent to ask what has brought about the convergence of Cuban and Chinese views on so many fundamental problems.

[17] *Ibid.*, June 6, 1962.

Perhaps the most important factor is the special significance which the Cubans attach to the military aspect of their revolution. They are convinced that armed struggle is the correct way to victory over "imperialism" and that attempts to achieve Communist revolutions by democratic means are bound to end in failure. They point in this context to the recent reverses suffered by Communist-inspired movements in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Argentina, and Venezuela.

By the same token the Cuban Communists find it difficult to give full backing to Khrushchev's interpretation of the meaning of "peaceful coexistence" and to his rather cautious approach in dealing with the Western powers. In Latin America particularly, they would like to see the Soviets take a more active role in supporting

CUBA—A MATTER OF DISAGREEMENT

Everyone knows that since the withdrawal of missiles from Cuba by the Soviet Union, US imperialism has become increasingly arrogant and aggressive, and that it will stop at nothing in trampling upon Cuban sovereignty. US ruling circles have purposely created side issues, continued their troublemaking on the question of so-called "offensive" weapons and "international inspection," and made unreasonable demands for the withdrawal of bombers from Cuba and "international inspection" on Cuban soil, in an attempt to create a pretext for armed attacks on Cuba.

The US imperialist lackey Tito and his like have tried, by hook or by crook, to bring pressure to bear on the Cuban people and force them to accept terms which impair their rights and sovereignty so as to meet the insatiable aggressive demands of US imperialism. In the face of these intrigues aimed at undermining the Cuban revolution, Premier Castro has given them his powerful answers. . . .

The present tension in the Caribbean has not been truly eased despite the withdrawal of the so-called "offensive" weapons from Cuba in accordance with the demand of the United States. The US military blockade of Cuba still has not been lifted, and its military preparations for the invasion of Cuba are being intensified. . . . The Kennedy administration has unreasonably rejected the Cuban people's five just demands aimed at ending US aggression and menace, and have even refused to give "assurances," though worthless anyway, not to invade Cuba. . . .

All this shows that the grave threat of US aggression against Cuba still persists, and that the claim that "peace has been saved" is pure nonsense. . . . History has furnished repeated proof that no humiliating concessions, sacrifices of sovereignty, or connivance at aggression, can make US imperialism, which is aggressive by nature, turn benevolent.

—Editorial in Jen-min jih-pao (Peking), November 18, 1962.

The past few days have been a severe test for the cause of universal peace. . . . Mankind found itself face to face with the threat of thermonuclear war. Aggressively inclined circles in the United States did not conceal their intentions of kindling a military conflict in the Caribbean area by undertaking an armed attack against the Cuban Republic. It is quite clear that in that eventuality the conflict would not have been limited to this area alone. . . .

At that moment the Soviet government, showing the highest restraint, calm, and firmness, took speedy and effective steps to avert the threatened conflict and save world peace. The course of events demonstrated that the farsighted and wise course of the Soviet government was the only correct one in the situation that had developed. . . . The decisive step . . . was the Soviet government's indication that appropriate measures were being taken to halt the construction in Cuba of installations depicted by the United States as threatening its security, to dismantle these installations and return them to the Soviet Union. This step . . . became possible as a result of the statement made by US President Kennedy in his message of October 27 to N. S. Khrushchev. The message stated that there would be no attack upon or invasion of Cuba by either the United States or other countries of the Western Hemisphere if the weapons termed "offensive" by the USA were removed from Cuba.

Thus reason and wisdom prevailed. At present all conditions exist for the total elimination of the conflict and for further efforts towards strengthening peace and security. All honest people concerned for the fate of peace render due appreciation to our Communist Party, to the Soviet government, and to Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev for the fact that the forces of aggression and war have been restrained and that reason in international relations has prevailed over folly.

—Editorial in Izvestia (Moscow), October 30, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

armed revolution and paramilitary operations and rely on a show of force in any confrontation with the United States. It was this philosophy that inspired their request for the placement of Soviet missiles on Cuban soil, and the same attitude eventually led to their disagreement and frustration with the Russians when the latter decided to withdraw the offensive weapons rather than risk an armed conflict with the United States. When, in a similar frame of mind, Castro had earlier asked Moscow to support his efforts to unseat the post-Trujillo government in the Dominican Republic, the Soviet response was equally disappointing. Khrushchev knew that such an enterprise would meet with determined resistance by the superior power of the United States.

Needless to say, the Cuban views on revolutionary strategy found favor in Peking, and the Chinese responded by supporting Castro's efforts to maintain a certain amount of latitude in his dealings with the Soviet Union and his own "old-line" Communists. When the latter, possibly with Soviet support, had made repeated attempts to limit his personal control over the daily planning and execution of government operations in Cuba, Castro countered first by proclaiming himself in December 1961 a "Marxist-Leninist," and then, since local Communist pressure on him failed to subside, by purging Anibal Escalante, a long-time Cuban party stalwart. On both occasions the Chinese demonstrated their solidarity with the Cuban leader by stressing in their press reports the wide areas of ideological agreement between the two countries. This the Soviets could not do.

The difference in the responses of the Communist capitals to Cuban developments was significant. Thus, in reporting Castro's December 1961 announcement of the establishment of the Integrated Revolutionary Organization which accompanied his public accession to the Communist faith, the official Soviet press completely ignored his assertions about the importance of the Cuban military experience as a model for revolutionary movements elsewhere. The Chinese fully reported this discussion, as well as Castro's remarks suggesting that more Communist support should be given to the anti-American movement in the Dominican Republic.[18] In his speech of March 26, 1962, in which he accused Escalante of monopolizing government positions, Castro also defended his own continuous stress on the importance of the military aspects of the Cuban revolution for the rest of Latin America and his non-committal stand on the ideological dispute in the Communist bloc. The Soviets, in their report of the speech, left out Castro's claim that his military road to power was correct, and omitted his condemnation of those who would not heed the Cuban lesson; in the Chinese version, these passages were prominently summarized. In the same speech, Castro also demanded to know why Cubans should concern themselves with problems of the Soviet Union, referring by implication to de-Stalinization and Albania. Again the Soviets made no reference to this section; the Chinese used it.[19]

In short, the Cuban Communist leadership maintains an ideological outlook and strategic notions which coincide in important respects with the official Chinese view and which lie at the core of the Sino-Soviet conflict. By and large, this convergence in outlook is the result of similar historical experiences, reinforced by the isolated position of the Cuban regime in the Western hemisphere. This isolation, as well as the independent origin of their revolution, allows the Cubans to enjoy an unusual degree of independence within the Communist bloc, which as late as last December they exercised—in spite of heavy Soviet pressure—by adopting a non-committal stand during the acrimonious discussions of Sino-Soviet differences at the Italian party congress. Since he is so utterly dependent on the USSR for economic survival, Castro cannot afford to break with the Soviets, but neither can he find security in exclusive dependence on Moscow politically—a conclusion that was powerfully underlined by the recent Soviet military withdrawal from Cuba. It is within this context that Peking's political support for the Cuban regime and the Chinese Communists' appeal to Latin American parties in general become meaningful.

It will be interesting to watch whether this appeal will keep growing, particularly now in the aftermath of the Cuban crisis. While thus far the Latin American party leaders appear to be holding fast in their loyalty to the Soviet Union, it is quite likely that Peking's prestige has grown among the younger Communist activists who are undoubtedly impressed by the militant Chinese support of Castro's stand against his American enemies as well as his Soviet allies. These radical Communists may indeed agree with Mao that the Soviet-American agreement on Cuba constitutes a betrayal of revolutionary interests in all of Latin America, and they may in the future look even more eagerly toward Peking for leadership. The Chinese on their part will no doubt continue advancing their point of view in Latin America by every available means; their persuasiveness among the Communists there is likely to grow as the leaders loyal to Moscow continue to fail.

[18] *Cf. Izvestia,* Dec. 5, 1961, *and Jen-min jih-pao,* Dec. 5, 1962.

[19] *Cf. Komsomolskaia pravda,* March 29, 1962, and *Jen-min jih-pao,* March 29, 1962. See also *Pravda,* April 11, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

China's Poets to the Rescue

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, artists and writers have come out in force to support heroic Cuba. With pen, brush, graver and voice, with color, music and drama, they joined the millions of demonstrators in defense of Cuba and against US aggression. Poems and articles, songs and plays, posters and sketches carried to the masses the story of the Cuban people in defense of their rights and against Yankee imperialism. That story became the central theme of the art columns of the national and local press and of the radio and television programs during the past two weeks. Agit-prop plays in a wide variety of styles were rushed out by playwrights, directors and actors. Acted by theatrical groups in cities big and small, they added militant color to the mass demonstrations that thundered through the streets of the cities of China.

In Peking, a galaxy of well-known artists have contributed tributes to the heroic Cuban people. Tsang Ke-chia, Emi Siao, Yuan Chang-ching, Yuan Shui-po and other eminent poets have written poems for Cuba . . . Millions are singing *Peking-Havana.* The third verse . . . reads:

Havana to Peking,
In China and Cuba,
The call resounds,
The torch of struggle is aflame.
Keep step!
Close ranks!
We are determined
    To stay the bloody Yankee hand.
Latin America and Asia,
China and Cuba,
We are brothers of one family.
Shoulder to shoulder we march,
Rout US imperialism,
    Rout, rout, rout him!
Defeat him utterly!

. . . teachers and students of the Central Conservatory of Music . . . have turned out more than 30 songs in praise of Cuba, and they are working on more. At the Tien An Men Square, *China and Cuba are Together, Defend Cuba* and other new songs were sung to crowds of people by Peking's leading singers . . . An agit-prop group from the Peking People's Art Theater and other companies performing *The United States is Sure to Lose, Cuba is Sure to Win* was the center of attention of enthusiastic, applauding crowds waiting their turn to go on to the Cuban Embassy. This skit and *You Can Never Put it Under Lock and Key* by the Central Institute of Drama, and *Smash the Yankee Imperialist Paper Tiger!* by the Hopei Bangzi Opera Troupe, suited the mood of the demonstrators down to the ground.

At a poetry-reading in Peking sponsored by *Poetry* magazine and the Central People's Broadcasting Station, a galaxy of poets met . . . to read or hear their poems read to a full house at the Capital Theatre. It opened with Kuo Mo-jo's poem *Dedicated to the Pearl of the Caribbean Sea* written two years ago . . . recited by the actor Chou Cheng. The last two stanzas read:

Newborn Cuba,
We fully support you!
Our six hundred and fifty millions
    stand at your side!
We have a common enemy—
    We, in the East,
    You, in the West
And the same will to fight
    For national independence!
    For the freedom of mankind!
Cuba,
This is but a poem I dedicate to you,
But the will of the masses it praises
Will be transformed
    Into strength,
    Into planes,
    Into ICBMs,
    Into new types of weapons,
To bury the robber who bombs your sugar
        fields,
    That Yankee imperialism
That is digging itself its own grave.

The 30 poems read at the meeting included Tien Chien's *Fidel,* Ping Hsin's *A Message From Far Away,* and Yuan Chang-ching's *If You Want to Inspect, Do It in the United States.* The audience particularly liked Yuan Shui-po's own recital of his new piece *To Cuba,* written after reading Castro's November 1 speech to defend Cuba's sovereignty:

The mountain may not be high—
With a fairy spirit it becomes famous.
The water may not be deep—
With a dragon it is sacred. . . .
A country may be small,
Dedicated to Marxism-Leninism,
It is sacred!
The Western Hemisphere's biggest, newest and
    and beautiful red flag
Flies from the top of Maestra Mountain.

This is just a glimpse of the quickening flow of art and literature in China in support of the Cuban revolution. Artists and writers have pledged themselves to stand by their Cuban brothers forever with their arts as their weapon.

—*From* Peking Review, *November 16, 1962.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Image of Russia: II

EDITORS' NOTE: The articles below constitute this journal's second instalment in the series launched in the November-December issue (see "Liberalization—A Balance Sheet," by Robert Conquest, and "Is Coercion Withering Away?," by Jeremy Azrael). Both deal with the Soviet newspaper world as a gauge of liberalization: Mr. Gruliow focuses on the manipulation of facts in the daily press, and Mr. Simon presents a vignette of the life of a foreign correspondent in Moscow. A future article will deal with Soviet attempts to influence and distort Western reportage on the USSR.

The Role of the Press

By Leo Gruliow

LENIN HAD A FONDNESS for the idiomatic expression, *kto kovo?* — "who (will beat—or destroy) whom?" He used it to denote the irreconcilable contradiction, the conflict in which one side or the other must prevail.

Today, whenever special-interest groups clash within Soviet society or the adherents of one or another policy disclose their differences, outside analysts face the *kto kovo* pitfall—the temptation to interpret the development as a confrontation of opposites, bound to culminate in a showdown from which one or the other group must emerge victorious. Have the several administrative reforms in recent years emphasized economic management as the key task of the party, while the ideologists press the importance of their own role? There are those who will view the course of events as a mortal struggle between the managerial elite and the political elite. Is there fresh condemnation of "the cult" or a reaffirmation of Stalin's services to the revolution ("despite his excesses")? The Stalinists and the anti-Stalinists, then, are arrayed in serried ranks; who will beat whom?

This is not to say that the conflicts do not go on, that the various elite-groups do not contend for power or that "Stalinists" and "anti-Stalinists" (for want of better terms) lie down together, even as the lion and the lamb. It is to suggest that the clashes visible to the eye are not always what they seem.

The Soviet regime conceals a great deal from its people, let alone from the outside world. The outside observer must focus on the highlights that can be seen. Many details and complexities are necessarily missing from his picture. Thus simplified, the contending groups and trends in Soviet life appear more sharply defined than they may really be, the issues seem more clear-cut

Mr. Gruliow, who last appeared in these pages with "How the Soviet Newspaper Operates" (March-April 1956), has been since 1949 Editor-in-Chief of The Current Digest of the Soviet Press *(New York). He worked for five years as a newsman in the USSR during the 1930's.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(and, curiously, sometimes couched in terms more relevant to Western than to Soviet life), and the ultimate outcome is envisioned as a victory of one side over the other. Either Stalinism or anti-Stalinism. Either the managerial elite or the political elite. Either democratization or utter totalitarianism.

These remarks are inspired by much of the Western discussion on the mooted liberalism of the Khrushchev regime. The "either-or" interpretation creeps into it often unintentionally, to be sure. Both those who take the liberalization seriously and those who discount it are careful to voice qualifications and reservations in every respect. Yet inevitably, by the very alternatives in which the question is framed, they leave an impression of assuming that the present Soviet leadership either has adopted a liberal line ("democratization") or basically is hardly different from the preceding regimes.

Some point to the liberal tide that seems to flow in recurring, rising waves. They note that the regime has denounced many oppressive features of Stalinism, has eased the peasant's lot, is searching for rational economic methods, relies more on suasion and incentives and less on coercion, is increasing the trickle of consumer goods and is allowing intellectuals to speak out here and there. The Stalin era or the recent past provides the standard of comparison.

Others take Western democracy as their gauge and show that civil liberties have not been assured, the party dictatorship remains, collective farming leaves the peasant essentially a sharecropper, the trade unions continue to be tools of the regime, and the artists still suffer severe constraints. *Ergo,* little or nothing has changed fundamentally.

IT MIGHT BE argued that both sides are right and that the question is one of degree. True enough. But this leads back to the question of the direction taken by the regime. To ask: "More freedom, or essentially just as little?" is to invite the question, "which way is the regime headed?" And here is our old friend, *kto kovo?* Is it to be democratization or autocracy? It seems to this writer that the whole dispute misses the point. For there has been fundamental change, but not in the regime's goals or principles. What has changed is the setting in which the Soviet regime must operate.

This change came about long before Khrushchev took power. It consisted of factors bulking so large that to enumerate them is merely to remark the obvious: the ruinous destructiveness of nuclear weapons, the emergence of new national states, the progress of the underdeveloped countries in overcoming poverty and backwardness, the maturing of the Soviet economy, and the rise of a new generation which (in the Soviet Union no less than elsewhere) expects the good things of life and seeks beliefs of its own, remote from the issues and battles of yesteryear.

Elementary realities, these, already making themselves felt in Stalin's last years; yet the aging dictator stubbornly refused to admit these facts of postwar life, for merely to recognize them was to risk showing up the irrelevance of the established doxy to modern times. And even Malenkov failed to react to them vigorously.

Not so Khrushchev. Shrewdly, he seized upon the recognition of these simple realities to entrench himself in power, thus showing himself, as the Western press never tires of saying, "a realist." (The same term had been applied to Stalin, too, but in a somewhat different sense. Stalin recognized power when he saw it. Khrushchev recognizes some of the real issues and problems. Let it be noted, however, that it is only by contrast with his predecessors' willful blindness that he shines as a realist. The obvious facts of life that Khrushchev belatedly faced up to had been commonplaces to the statesmen, press and public of the West for a decade and more before Khrushchev awoke to them.)

This is the basis for what, for want of a better word, we call the "democratization" of Soviet society. Khrushchev has looked at issues and problems which his predecessors dodged; he has thrown some of them open to discussion and has experimented with ways of meeting them; he has yielded to the pressures which some of these issues present. But at no time has he abandoned his goals and principles. What he has done is to attempt to reconcile them with the actualities which he has perceived.

Yet it is one thing to acknowledge realities, and another to solve the problems they present—particularly when the solutions must fit preconceived goals. When Khrushchev condemns Stalin or Molotov for refusing to face simple facts, he is on solid ground. When he sets forth the problems which they (and Malenkov also) evaded, and shows his own awareness of them, he remains persuasive. But when he himself begins to outline solutions for these problems, he is forced to indulge in wild zigzags, tortured rearrangements, and improvisations—whether the issue be Berlin or domestic economic reorganization—until the vision blurs.

What we are witnessing, then, is not so much a struggle between liberal and autocratic tendencies (although this is going on, too), nor a consistent policy caused by a change of heart on the part of the regime, but rather a floundering and fumbling as the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Soviet leadership strives to reconcile the old goals and principles with today's facts which it has, belatedly, recognized.

THE SOVIET PRESS behavior mirrors this situation. When we compare Khrushchev's press with Stalin's or even with the press of Malenkov's day, the nature of the change becomes apparent.

From Lenin's time to ours, the Soviet leaders have regarded the press purely as a tool for manipulating the public mind and never as an objective reporter of information. Lenin called it a "collective propagandist, collective agitator, collective organizer." Stalin termed it "our longest-range weapon." In Khrushchev's words, it is the party's "sharp and militant weapon." So interchangeable are the definitions that one famous writer on Soviet affairs recently ascribed Khrushchev's words about the press to Lenin and it made no difference. None of the heads of the Soviet regime has shown any scruples about using the press to obscure, conceal or distort facts for his own purposes.

Khrushchev is no different in this respect from his predecessors. Under his rule the press has not become free, nor is it likely to. The rule is still that any fact which cannot fit into the official doctrine is suppressed. But Khrushchev's doctrine now takes cognizance of a whole set of facts that were not provided for in Stalin's, and as a consequence the press is more realistic in its picture of the world.

Because there were so many facts that could not be fitted into the arbitrary schemata which Stalin elaborated behind the tightly shut door of his office, his press resorted to suppression of information on a staggering scale. To take a single instance from hundreds: the Soviet press continued to describe India as a colony years after she had won independence. This Soviet press treatment of India caused first disbelief and then indignation when it came to the attention of the government and the Indian Parliament early in the 1950's.

Even more striking was the concealment, throughout the Stalin years, of the dangers of nuclear warfare. The simplest data on the destructive power of atomic and hydrogen bombs and the facts of the danger of fallout were carefully hidden from the Soviet public. All this was dismissed as part of "the American paper horror mill." The picture of the mushroom cloud was unknown to the Soviet people. So ostrich-like was Moscow's press policy on these topics that even the Soviet Union's own first atomic explosion in 1949 and again its explosion of a second bomb in 1951 were reported to the public by the Soviet press in the form of announcements from the White House.

Malenkov wavered in his treatment of the subject. When President Eisenhower proposed the "atoms-for-peace" stockpile plan in December 1953, the President said of the increase in the power of nuclear weapons that "every citizen of the world should have some comprehension, at least in comparative terms, of the *extent* of this development." The Soviet press changed this in translation to "the *nature* of this development" [1] The censor also deleted the President's mention of the existence of hydrogen bombs "in the range of millions of tons of TNT equivalent." After the American ambassador spoke with Molotov about this censorship the Soviet press printed, twelve days later, a slightly fuller version of the President's remarks—still omitting these passages but now quoting his references to the danger that civilization might be destroyed.[2]

Malenkov made the first Soviet acknowledgment of such a danger in his election speech of March 1954. Hardly a month later, addressing the Supreme Soviet, he revived the old line that it was not civilization that would fall, but capitalism.[3]

Not until the start of 1955 was the Soviet public apprised of the fact that there were thermonuclear bombs thousands of times more powerful than the bomb that exploded over Hiroshima. But Molotov was simultaneously reminding the Soviet people that not world civilization, only capitalism, would be imperiled by nuclear warfare.[4]

IT IS A FAR CRY from this never-never world of Stalin's later days and the hesitant Malenkov interregnum to the present era, when the destructiveness of nuclear weapons is a constant theme. Today the independence of each new African country is recognized in the Soviet press with maps, descriptions of the new country, and a fanfare of publicity. Soviet youth, which in Stalin's time was seen but not heard in the press, now is wont to raise troublesome questions in public print. The problems and difficulties of managing a complicated economy are discussed endlessly instead of being swept under the rug. Khrushchev himself goes trotting about the world, reporting back such discoveries

---

[1] *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* December 10, 1953.

[2] *Izvestia,* December 22, 1953, p. 2.

[3] *Pravda,* April 27, 1954 pp. 5-6; *Izvestia* of same date, pp. 7-8. (Translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* Vol. VI, No. 24, p. 10.)

[4] Report to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* February 9, 1955, pp. 2-4.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the fact that there are things to be learned from Western industry and agriculture. In almost every field there is a confrontation of actualities—something which was inconceivable in the recent past.

"Self-criticism," always a device of Soviet newspapers for prodding the public and the intermediate-level functionaries, is carried to greater and greater lengths, at times even to the point of denting the regime's self-image. The picture of the USSR as a world leader in science and industry is weakened by Khrushchev's own admission that the land of space flights has a backward chemical industry. The vision of an increasingly consumer-oriented country is impaired by revelations of meat shortages in the shops and of high labor turnover in major industrial areas due to poor living conditions. The claim of a vigorous, large-scale socialist agriculture is allowed to be shadowed over by denunciations of the feeding of large numbers of privately-owned cattle on store-bought bread. The concept of a planned and unified bloc economy is vitiated by the admission that the socialist bloc has still to come up to the challenge of the Common Market in the sphere of economic integration. The preachment of socialist morality as a higher ethic is contradicted by stories of extraordinary embezzlement, nepotism and parasitic living.

All this and more is permitted—indeed, encouraged—inasmuch as it is criticism directed at improving the implementation of the regime's goals and policies. There is, of course, a tremendous amount of day-to-day petty suppression of information and inhibition of expression, so much that the mind boggles at the mere thought of trying to list the instances that occur in a single month. But it is nothing like the sweeping irrationalities of Stalin's press, which could deny for years a whole subcontinent's independence or the power of nuclear weapons.

WHERE, THEN, are the limits? First of all, the flow of information remains strictly controlled. The orders and instructions to the press come, as before, from Agitprop. The leash has been let out, and the press can roam farther afield; but the leash is always there, and from time to time it is shortened.

As long as the facts can be used in accord with the regime's purposes and as long as they can be explained in a manner consonant with its ideology, even awkward information can be presented in the Soviet press today. It is when the facts shatter the regime's public image and do not lend themselves to any explanation within the ideological framework that the big curtain descends.

We have had three recent conspicuous examples: the erection of the Berlin wall in the autumn of 1961, the story of the Soviet bases in Cuba in the autumn of 1962, and the Chinese attack upon India in the same period. Each one was a test case, and each is instructive in its own way.

The central element in the story of the Berlin wall was the purpose of the wall—namely, to prevent the further flight of East Germans. This so flatly contradicted the whole Communist thesis that it could not be tolerated. As far as Soviet newspapers were concerned, no one fled from East Germany except a handful of thieves and spies; the border was closed solely to prevent the entry of spies from West Germany; Soviet troops were not in the vicinity, tanks and guns were not deployed, the East German police did not use tear gas or water hoses; statements from the West, such as US Secretary of State Rusk's offer to sumbit the Berlin question to the United Nations, were suppressed; criticism by neutrals, such as Indian Prime Minister Nehru, was not reported; in fact, for a long time Soviet citizens were not even told that there *was* a wall. It was only a month after the wall had been erected that a single Soviet daily *Izvestia,* made brief mention of a barrier of barbed wire, bricks and cement. Until that time it had been treated merely as a peaceable closing of the border by an indignant and aroused East German populace.

In the case of the Berlin wall, the Soviet side held the initiative, and Agitprop was able to keep a sure hand on the flow of information to the Soviet people. Soviet correpsondents on the scene built up a barrage of first-person stories describing the joy on the faces of Berlin's residents.

The fighting on the Chinese-Indian frontier was a more difficult story for Agitprop to handle. Here, too, the facts contradicted a basic ideological claim—namely, that the Communist countries were united in the pursuit of peace. For five days after both sides had announced the outbreak of hostilities, the Soviet press suppressed the news. On the sixth day two papers alone, out of the whole Soviet press, carried the text of a Chinese statement declaring that armed clashes had occurred and proposing a truce on Chinese terms.[5] Editorials in the two papers backed the proposal.[6]

There was no indication of which side had opened hostilities; "imperialist circles in the West" were blamed for instigating them. There was no mention of how the fighting was going. The Soviet editorials attacked Indian

[5] *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* October 25, 1962.

[6] *Pravda* editorial on same date; *Izvestia* editorial in national edition of October 26.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"reactionary circles" and remarked that in the situation prevailing in India "even progressive-minded persons may succumb to nationalistic influences and take a chauvinistic stand." Of all the Soviet papers, only *Pravda* (November 1, 1962) reported Krishna Menon's dismissal as Defense Minister—in a two-sentence item in small type, without any heading or explanation. Two weeks of warfare went unreported; then *Pravda* (November 5) carried another editorial urging a truce, but not describing the state of affairs; and that was the extent of the information offered to the Soviet public until the cease-fire, one month after the fighting had broken out. All Soviet dailies seem to have announced the cease-fire in the war that only two of them had ever mentioned previously and that none of them had reported.

THE EMBARRASSED TREATMENT of the Chinese aggression and the suppression of the news about it were as nothing compared to the gyrations of the Soviet press in dealing with the Cuban story.

President Kennedy's initial disclosure of the presence of long-range Soviet missiles in Cuba was never published in the USSR. The Soviet government statement breaking the news of the quarantine to the Soviet people spoke only of "weapons defined by the United States as offensive weapons."[7] It did not identify them as long-range missiles or as Soviet weapons. The press broke into denunciations of US "piracy" and "aggression" and accused the United States of "strangling" Cuban women and children by cutting off supplies. Protest meetings went on all over the Soviet Union for three days. US aerial photos of weapons installations in Cuba were derided as fakes.

The first indication to the Soviet public of the nature of the weapons in question did not come until the height of this period of protests and demonstrations, and it was accompanied by denials of the American charges. Even then the exact nature of the weapons was concealed. After three days of meetings protesting against the "farce" of the American charges, it must have come as a shock to the Soviet people to read in Premier Khrushchev's October 28 message to Kennedy:

I regard with great understanding your concern and the concern of the people of the United States of America in connection with the fact that the weapons which you describe as offensive are indeed formidable *(grozny)*. Both you and we understand what kind of weapons these are.[8]

[7] *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, October 24, 1962, p. 1.
[8] *Ibid.*, October 28, 1962, p. 1.

Khrushchev and Kennedy may have understood, along with the people of most of the world outside the Soviet bloc; but those within the Soviet Union had to guess.

So swiftly did Agitprop change the tune on Cuba that *Izvestia* was caught napping. On page two of its national edition of October 28, one of its commentators lashed out at the "cynical traders' and money-changers' yardstick" of those Americans who talked of trading American bases near Soviet territory for the removal of Soviet long-range weapons from Cuba; on page one of the same paper was the text of Khrushchev's note offering just such a trade.

Within a week "nonoffensive" weapons changed, in the Soviet press, into menacing ones; they ceased to be Cuban and became Soviet; and their removal became a victory for peace (the question of what their installation had been was left unanswered). The Soviet public was not told that Soviet vessels carrying peaceful cargoes had been passed by the US quarantine forces, nor that other vessels had turned back at sea; it was not told that work on the missile installations had first proceeded after the announcement of the quarantine and then stopped; it was not told of the negotiations over inspection of the weapons' removal or of differences between the Soviet stand on this matter and the position that Cuba took.

What Page of *Izvestia* Do You Read?

Some persons in the USA, measuring everything by their cynical traders' and money changers' yardstick, are indulging in speculation as to whether they might, so to say, "give away" some American bases near Soviet territory in exchange for depriving Cuba of the means of repelling American aggression. This is how [Max] Frankel, a Washington correspondent of the New York Times, *talked in that paper October 25th. Such, if you please, "proposals" give away only their authors' unclean consciences.*

—*Izvestia*, October 28, p. 2.

I [Khrushchev in message to President Kennedy] . . . make this proposal: We agree to remove those weapons from Cuba which you regard as offensive weapons. We agree to do this and to state this commitment in the United Nations. Your representative will make a statement to the effect that the United States, on its part, bearing in mind the anxiety and concern of the Soviet state, will evacuate its analogous weapons from Turkey.

—Same paper, same date, p. 1.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THESE ARE THREE case histories of the Soviet suppression of major news. The instances could be multiplied; there are a host of lesser cases. Suppression of information, however, is only part of the picture. In any consideration of the Soviet press it is equally significant to note the regimented unanimity with which it swings into action at the slightest signal from above. Anyone who reads the Soviet press is familiar with the campaigns that sweep through its pages, fever-like. The germ of a single remark dropped by Khrushchev is enough to set a campaign in motion, and no Soviet paper is immune; all break out simultaneously in a rash of headlines and articles on the dictated topic, keeping it up until the fever is spent; and a fresh fever breaks out at the next signal.

This subservient unanimity of the press is invoked at times in response to a passing whim or humor of the leader. In a speech a few years ago, Khrushchev related the case of a reformed criminal who had appealed to him personally for help in "going straight." Expressing the opinion that a more lenient attitude might be taken toward petty criminals with the proper spirit of remorse, the Soviet leader suggested that such offenders might be paroled under surveillance at their places of work or residence, rather than be incarcerated.[9] Without dissent, the press set up a hue and cry for such a parole system. After a time the campaign died out. A few years later it was reversed—with equal unanimity—and a steady denunciation of leniency and parole issued from the press. But never once did the papers mention that the trend toward clemency had been initiated by Khrushchev himself.

A similar about-face has been executed in the treatment of religion: just as there was a unanimous response several years ago to a signal that insulting attacks on the clergy and on believers be terminated, so there has been a unanimous press effort in more recent campaigns to blacken religion, frequently by depicting men of the cloth as corrupt, drunken or perverted, and their parishioners as inhuman fanatics. The same exaggerated press response to the leader's mood was recently demonstrated after Khrushchev visited an art show and erupted with criticism of "decadent" abstract painting. The press swung into line with a campaign of vituperation against nonrealistic art and even managed to find a Soviet citizen who had become a spy through his admiration for abstractionism.

Soviet treatment of crime news runs in "waves," depending upon what campaign has currently been decreed. When the campaign fever is running against speculation, almost all the crime reports are on speculation. The same is true when the favored target is "hooliganism" or embezzlement. In short, what is printed is less news than it is "advertising" for drives ordered from above. Then there are periods when crime news disappears. This, too, is a campaign, of a kind.

Forty and more years ago some American newspapers used to indulge in the invention of "crime waves." It became a joke among their readers that when other news was dull, a newspaper might proclaim that a "crime wave" had hit the area, particularly if the newspaper was opposed to the local mayor or police commissioner. Yet almost always there was another newspaper ready to deflate and ridicule the story. The Western press is not spotless in its record of suppression or exaggeration of facts. But the possibility of diversity in a relatively free market of opinion is a prime difference distinguishing the Western press from the Soviet press, even at the latter's best. Once in a while Soviet journals show a few timid signs of independence—for example, *Novyi mir,* now edited by the "liberal" poet Tvardovsky, prints works by Ehrenburg, Dudintsev, Bondarev, Solzhenitsyn and other writers who incur the displeasure of the more conservative journals,[10] and the press at large is generally willing to debate policies on which the regime is as yet undecided or which are of minor significance. But once an issue of any import is settled on high and the orders go out, the press lines up. If an editor dares to defy the decreed line, he stands a good chance of being dismissed.

WHAT ARE WE to make of this Soviet press? The question is crucial to the whole discussion of the "democratization" of Soviet society, for there can hardly be a trend toward more democratic practices without an informed public.

---

[9] Speech to Soviet Congress of Writers, May 22, 1959, published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* May 24, 1959, pp. 1-3. (Translated in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* Vol. XI, No. 21, pp. 3-9, 29.)

[10] It is noteworthy, however, that *Novyi mir,* in publishing Alexander Solzhenitsyn's story "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich"—the first Soviet account of life in a Siberian concentration camp under Stalin—acted with specific authorization from the party Central Committee. This was disclosed by party Secretary L. F. Ilyichev in his speech at a meeting of party and government leaders with Soviet men of letters and artists on December 18, 1962. Ilyichev, while boasting of this and other examples of top-level approval of "anti-Stalinist" writings, warned against the demand for "books without editors." In Soviet publishing, the censor holds the title of "editor," which explains the meaning of Ilyichev's cryptic phrase. In contrast to Solzhenitsyn, Ehrenburg, Dudintsev, and Bondarev have all been attacked—albeit unsuccessfully so far—for their writings in *Novyi mir.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Certainly Khrushchev's press is a great improvement over Stalin's. Just as certainly, it is not a free press. All of the controls and all of the dictation from above remain. The difference is in how the controls are applied—in the length of the leash.

Edward Crankshaw looks to the time when "more and more Soviet journalists, in one context or another, will, however intermittently, be required or allowed to utter truth." In his view, "there are enough people in the Soviet Union who know the difference between truth and lies, and have seen that the truth can on occasion be spoken—there are tens of millions of them—to form the foundation of a public opinion which will demand not only specific action from the government but also more information on which it can base its views on the need for further action."[11] No one would dispute that plenty of Russians recognize propaganda for what it is, and dislike it. But it is hard to see how such dissatisfaction can ever develop into a concerted and effective force so long as those who hold the controls regard the press and public opinion itself in the frame of reference shared by Lenin, Stalin and Khrushchev.

The degree of openness and freedom in the press depends, then, not upon *kto kovo?*—whether public opinion or those who long for such openness will prevail over the autocratic manipulation of facts and views—but, in the long run, upon the extent to which the Soviet regime can reconcile its creed with the facts of life. When the discrepancies are not too disturbing, it finds a measure of journalistic frankness expedient. When the contrast is too painful—as in the Cuban missiles case, the Chinese-Indian conflict, or the story of the Berlin wall—it suppresses the facts. For its main function remains now—as it has since its inception—to propagandize rather than to inform, to indoctrinate rather than to enlighten.

[11] *The New York Times Magazine* (Sunday), Dec. 2, 1962.

A Correspondent in Moscow

By Sacha Simon

THE WESTERN COLONY in Moscow, consisting of diplomats, newspapermen and their families, totals about 2,000 persons. They can be roughly divided in three categories: those who look upon their stay in Moscow as exile, detesting every aspect of their daily life; those who live in an ivory tower and refuse to see or hear anything outside their professional obligations; and those, finally, who, moved by a desire to discover the strange and enigmatic world that surrounds them, pass their time fulminating against the over-bureaucratized Soviet institutions and extolling the warm nature and great virtues of the Russian people—the most sensitive, expressive, and hospitable of all peoples. . . .

Indeed, the warmth of the people and the harshness of the regime are the two factors that continuously confront everyone, and particularly the journalists who have the thankless task of reporting on a country still withdrawn in its own shell, still suffering from complexes that cast any foreigner in the role of a potential enemy or spy.

While knowledge of the Russian language is essential to an understanding of the Soviet scene, it is not sufficient of itself. Intellectually and emotionally, the Russian people—and their rulers—are so different from their Western counterparts that all comparisons are always partly false. A deeper knowledge of the country is necessary in order to appreciate Soviet life in all its nuances. That is why I considered myself very fortunate during

Mr. Simon was formerly correspondent in Moscow for Le Figaro *(Paris) and now covers the Balkans for the same newspaper. He is the author of* Chers Soviétiques—Chroniques d'un expulsé sans rancune *(Paris, Robert Laffont, 1962).*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my various professional stays in the USSR: not only do I speak Russian as well as I do French, but Slavic blood courses in my veins (my mother was the grand-niece of the Russian writer Goncharov) and Russia was the land of my childhood; I left there at the age of 12, having witnessed the October Revolution.

This background helped me understand the Soviets, and they, I believe, appreciated what they called my spirit of objectivity. I always made sure that my facts were accurate, and then commented on them as freely as I deemed wise. This, indeed, is the golden rule of any foreign journalist working in the Soviet Union, but its practice is not as simple as it might appear. Soviet authorities consider only reports published in the official press as legitimate and reliable sources of information, and this as well as other restrictions explain the difficulty of reporting current Soviet events fully and promptly. Nevertheless, since Stalin's death the opportunities for more adequate reporting from the USSR have increased considerably.

MY FIRST TRIP to the Soviet Union as a special correspondent of a French newspaper took place in 1954. I arrived with the Comédie Française and decided I would try on that occasion to visit the village, about 100 miles south of Moscow, where I had spent my childhood. After waiting about two weeks, I received permission from L. F. Ilichev, who was then Head of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to make the trip. Alone, without an interpreter, I set out first for Perimichl, a small town situated about five miles from my village. Upon my arrival there, the whole town of some 1,800 inhabitants confronted me as an intruder and potential spy. Old women who had known my grandmother refused to recognize me. Schoolboys stopped me in the street to ask whether I had official authorization to stay in the town. Representatives of the *ispolkom* (municipal council) urged that I return to Moscow, where "a visit is much pleasanter for a foreigner." On the second day the strain was relieved a bit for the first time. An old peasant woman from the village arrived and very cordially invited me to spend two weeks at Pokrovskoe: "The old people remember your grandmother's kindness. They are expecting you and look forward to seeing you again. . . ." I was deeply touched. Nevertheless, I had to leave, and postpone the visit to my childhood haunts.

Five years later, in 1961, I made the pilgrimage again, this time accompanied by a Soviet colleague whom I had asked to come along so as to avoid a repetition of the earlier misunderstandings. The three days that followed were wonderful and heartwarming. The old *kolkhozniki* of the village surrounded me with affection and hospitality that did not falter for a minute. Suffused with childhood memories, I went from one *izba* (peasant room) to another, answering a thousand questions and filling myself on salted cucumbers, country omelettes, fruit and vodka. The news went from one end of the little village to the other: "The little *barchuk,* the son of our old landowner, came back to see us."

The chairman of the *kolkhoz,* a party member, who had come from the Smolensk region to reorganize the work on the land, gave me a guarded welcome. I still was, after all, a foreigner, a reporter for a "capitalist" daily, and the grandson of the prerevolutionary owner of the village. Nevertheless, after a few hours we became the best of friends. "I can see," he said, "that you came here with pure intentions to recapture your past. Make yourself at home here, do whatever you like. . . ."

This freedom of movement on the *kolkhoz* gave me the opportunity to illustrate with concrete examples the agricultural difficulties about which Khrushchev had recently complained in a public speech. Yet I resisted the temptation because it seemed to me that by doing otherwise I would have betrayed the confidence which the village had placed in me. I limited myself therefore to describing the affectionate scenes that filled the course of my visit.

It is often said, and it is indeed quite true, that the Russians detest duplicity in human relations. I think that I got along in the Soviet Union as well as I did because I always expressed frankly, and sometimes brutally, my convictions, which are so much opposed to theirs; because I never missed an opportunity to point out their errors and the stupidity of some of their institutions—particularly their propaganda.

BOTH OVERLY SIMPLISTIC and overly shrill, Soviet propaganda endeavors to fix in people's minds the image of a decadent bourgeois world in which horrible monsters—capitalists, imperialists, colonialists, bankers, priests, bloodthirsty soldiers and policemen—rule tyrannically over enslaved people. The graphic symbols of this childish propaganda are always the same: the big belly, the bestial face, the colonial helmet, the sword dripping blood, the aspergillum brandished as a club, represent the oppressors; and spindly legs of the undernourished, shackled hands and feet, fists outstretched and desperate mothers bearing sickly children, represent the exploited and oppressed. In contrast to this bourgeois inferno, Soviet life is pic-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tured as the best of all worlds. Everything in it, if not perfect, is at least worthy of admiration and especially rich in future promise.

The naiveté and improbability of this propaganda is an effective argument in discussions with the Soviets. More and more they are inclined to admit: "Yes, we know that certain aspects of our propaganda are still a holdover from the Stalinist period." But then, in explanation of the persisting anti-Western campaign, they usually add that as soon as anti-Soviet propaganda in the West becomes less virulent, "we shall tone down our statements."

Censorship was another subject which invariably bothered the Soviets whenever it was brought up by Western journalists. Officially, in fact, its existence was denied. "We have only a literary service," was the standard answer. But the thing was all too obvious, and it was easy for us to plead that without freedom of speech, which all the revolutionaries of the past 150 years have defended, there is no professional dignity for a journalist.

Censorship of the press had been practiced in Russia for over a century until it disappeared with the overthrow of the Tsarist regime in the 1917 February Revolution. The newly-won freedom did not last long, however. Following the Bolshevik seizure of power in the Revolution of October, the practice was reinstituted and eventually under Stalin evolved into the most highly developed system of thought control known in history. While after Stalin's death censorship was relaxed somewhat, it remained in effect in all spheres, including outgoing dispatches of foreign correspondents in the USSR. All our reports, whether they were concerned with a soccer game or Khrushchev's press conference, had to be delivered to a special window at the International Telegraph Office where they were held, usually for half an hour, but sometimes as long as six hours. The basic criteria applied by the censors were elementary: only official sources of information, *i.e.,* Soviet newspapers and radio broadcasts, were to be used and considered legitimate; and as far as commentaries were concerned, everything that could offend the USSR, its government and its citizens was to be avoided. These rules had, of course, a preventive effect as well. In order to avoid excessive delays in the sending of our dispatches, we censored ourselves, and omitted from our stories any imprudent words or remarks. Having to choose between absolute sincerity and meeting our deadlines, we chose toned-down reports transmitted in time.

Prior censorship of outgoing dispatches was abolished in March 1961 and replaced by a check of published reports, but the conditions of work for foreign journalists changed little as a result of it. We were then all the more at the mercy of the Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on which we depended for our visas and which prescribed the regulations governing our stay in Moscow. A report considered incorrect by the Press Department was enough to complicate seriously the day-to-day existence of a foreign correspondent, and the sanctions tacitly applied were much like the punishment meted out to a disobedient school boy. I remember the case of a colleague who, because he had written that censorship would be lifted for the Powers trial,* failed to receive his press card until a few minutes before the first hearing. Others, having published reports of which the Press Department disapproved, found themselves restricted for weeks to Moscow and its environs. A lady colleague of mine, who had proved to be too alert on previous occasions, was no longer invited to Kremlin receptions. "The number of journalists," she was told in all seriousness, "is limited because of the crowd. . . ."

Some of the measures that the Soviets resorted to were truly shocking, but these may not have been inspired by the Press Department. One day during my stay in Moscow, I was surprised to read in the papers an elaborate account of nightly debauches allegedly organized by an American reporter, a photographer, in his hotel room. Nothing was left out in the story—even the quantities of alcohol consumed were given, and a list of accomodating girls who were said to have participated. As I later found out, the facts were much more modest: a few friends, all strangers in Moscow, had gathered occasionally around a bottle of whisky to talk about their experience and life at home.

The latest among the insufferable acts of blackmailing that have come to my attention is the case of an American lady reporter who was picked up drunk in the street one night by one of the Moscow sobering-up crews. A long story in *Izvestia,* illustrated with three "edifying" photographs, described the attention that had been given to the intoxicated reporter and hypocritically lamented the misconduct of the Western press. All of us who were acquainted with the lady knew that she never drank and that she led an orderly and sensible life. Her astonishing misadventure was never explained. She had drunk two glasses of wine in the company of a couple of Russians whom she met in a restaurant. Shortly thereafter she found herself in the

* The trial took place in August 1960, *i.e.,* seven months before prior censorship of outgoing news was permanently lifted.—*Ed.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

street completely intoxicated. . . . The only thing that is always clear in connection with such "revelations" in the press is the fact that the victim is forced to leave the USSR. These "exposures," just as refusals to grant or extend visas, are less spectacular than outright expulsion, but the effect is similar.

EXPULSIONS HAVE the disadvantage that they generally lead to retaliation, and they are therefore rarer. I happen to be among the relatively few Western newsmen expelled from the USSR since World War II, and while I am not familiar with the circumstances surrounding the expulsions of my colleagues, fundamental honesty compels me to say that in my own case the order precipitating my departure was the result of a misunderstanding, the tragicomic details of which need not be discussed here. Suffice it to say that the Soviet authorities stressed several times that my expulsion was not personal (the offending article was not written by me), and that three days after my departure they permitted me to return to Moscow in a private capacity in order to arrange for the transfer of my effects.

While the suspension of censorship of outgoing news offered little new freedom to foreign correspondents in Moscow, our sources of information also failed to improve. Aside from the extremely rare press conferences given by Mr. Khrushchev (two during my two-years' tour of duty in Moscow), no responsible Soviet official ever offered us any comments on Soviet domestic and foreign policy. Whenever we sought information from the Press Department (by telephone only), the response was invariably the same: "We can tell you nothing. Read *Pravda* or *Izvestia*." Thus left to our own resources, we depended for our news stories as well as our commentaries on the boring Soviet newspapers. Needless to say, it required much imagination and knowledge of Communist mentality to find in these dogmatic, conformist texts material that would enlighten Western readers about contemporary Soviet life.

This also explains why there was in Moscow such a spirit of solidarity among foreign journalists, even those belonging to rival newspapers. Exchanges of information and insight based on reading between the lines of the official stories helped us immeasurably in translating the phraseology of the Communist texts into comprehensible interpretive reports. At the same time, while trying to act as perspicacious observers, we sought to avoid offending the regime so as to escape unnecessary difficulties and unpleasantness.

One more obstacle which occasionally confronts foreign journalists in Moscow deserves mentioning. Soviet officials have the nasty habit of too often confusing expressions of friendship for the Russian people and moderation in one's utterances about the Soviet Union with approval of the Soviet system of government. And they are quick, given half an opportunity, to turn one into a Communist tool. The means employed for this purpose are subtle and varied: admit that you have a certain amount of admiration for the children's nurseries, and immediately you will be considered a political sympathizer. That is why in the Soviet Union I always expressed approval in somewhat muted forms, adding usually that "we in the West can also show excellent accomplishments." For every time I expressed approval, I felt my little finger caught in the awesome machinery of a political system which, in spite of the improvements of the post-Stalin decade, continues to conceive of men as termites without an individual will or purpose.

A Note to Our Readers

The last issue of this journal (November-December 1962) carried an item entitled "What Is a Crime?", which told of a young Soviet citizen named Adolf Yosifovitch Yutson who was sentenced to four years of compulsory labor for leading a "parasitic" life. We asked our readers to define the crime for which Yutson had been sentenced, and "to point to any other civilized country boasting similar legal concepts." Those who sent correct answers were promised a bound copy of J. V. Stalin's *Problems of Leninism*.

To this date we have received quite a few answers, some of them of a most interesting and provocative nature. To appraise them we felt that the knowledge and views of an expert on Soviet law would be in order. Accordingly, we have asked Mr. Leon Lipson, Professor of Law at Yale University, and one of the foremost authorities on Soviet legal problems, to help us judge which correspondents are entitled to the prize. We have also written to Professor P. S. Romashkin, Director of the Institute of State and Law in Moscow, asking him to comment on the Yutson case, as well as on the wider ramifications of the articles by Messrs. Robert Conquest and Jeremy Azrael (respectively "Liberalization—A Balance Sheet" and "Is Coercion Withering Away?") appearing in the same issue as our offer. The letters—including, we hope, a reply from Mr. Romashkin—and Mr. Lipson's analysis will be published in the May-June issue of *Problems of Communism*. Further letters will be accepted until March 1.

—The Editors

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The "Cold War" on the Literary Front

Part III: The Party and the Writers

By David Burg

EDITORS' NOTE: This is the third and concluding part of Mr. Burg's survey of Soviet literary life since Stalin's death. In the first ("The Writers' Underground," July-August 1962), the author depicted the subterranean sector of the literary scene; the second ("Groups, Trends, Genres," September-October 1962) dealt with the various groupings among Soviet writers, and with their literary and political credos. The last part traces the attempts of the liberal and radical men of letters to broaden the area of creative freedom—attempts that have been partially succesful, in spite of the determination of the Communist Party and the so-called "dogmatist" writers to preserve the essentials of totalitarian controls over the arts.

THE TWO PRECEDING articles dealt with the lively growth and multi-faceted development of Soviet literature in the post-Stalin decade. But if we supposed that neither books, magazines nor underground manuscripts were reaching us from the Soviet Union and that we were receiving only official Soviet pronouncements on literature, we would have the impression that nothing essential had changed as compared to Zhdanov's day. The new party program has merely rearranged the same old phrases, advocating, in effect, the continuation of Stalinist traditions in respect to art, and official Soviet criticism constantly reiterates these clichés.[1]

Soviet censorship has also theoretically remained immutable. The crude word "censorship" never appears in print, and indeed making sure that it never does is one of the functions of the establishment which with bureaucratic modesty calls itself the Chief Administration for Literary Affairs and Publishing (*Glavlit*). As a matter of fact, this word has not been used in public documents since 1925. Under Soviet rule the censor has become for the first time in the history of Russia the judge not only of what is politically permissible, but also of the esthetic qualities of literature. His prerogatives in this respect are enormous, inasmuch as there is no formal appeal of censorship decisions to any state judicial organ, although in fact there are protests from time to time—at no small risk—through party channels.

The enormous authority of Glavlit and the general party line on questions of art are thus probably the most longlasting constants in the system of controls over literature. Yet to say that is not to define the

Formerly a student at Moscow University, Mr. Burg is now a Fellow at King's College, Cambridge University, and has published numerous articles in recent years on Soviet literary and political problems. His three articles for this journal, considerably enlarged, will be published as a book later this year by F. A. Praeger, New York.

[1] See the new CPSU program in *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 16, 1961. On p. 95 the reader will find the party's statement on culture and art, to wit: "In the art of socialist realism, which is based on the principle of party-mindedness and kinship with people, bold pioneering in the artistic depiction of life goes hand in hand with the cultivation and development of the progressive traditions of world culture. . . . The highroad of literature and art lies . . . through faithful . . . depiction of the richness and versatility of socialist reality, through inspired and vivid portrayal of all that is new and genuinely Communist, and exposure of all that hinders the progress of society . . ." etc., etc.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

relationship between the writer and the party, for there is one other factor to be considered—namely, the ever-changing political climate in the USSR. That this factor plays an all-important role was demonstrated dramatically in March 1953, when the paranoiac tyrant died, and when a new political atmosphere began to take shape—an atmosphere which also affected the creative artist and his relations with the bureaucrats above him.

By October of that year, at the 14th plenum of the administrative board of the Writers' Union, liberal voices were heard in the open for the first time in many years. Simultaneously, A. Fadeyev was replaced as first secretary of the Union by Alexei Surkov. Although Surkov was no less orthodox, this change introduced the first element of instability into Stalinist literary monolithism. In December, Vladimir Pomerantsev and other critics of the literary monthly *Novyi mir* sensed that a new literature had now become politically possible, and they even predicted its character: "In a year or two, you (the readers) will get genuine art. . . . Books should be written about people. . . . Introduce real conflict into novels."[2] Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw,* the name by which this whole historic period is now known, began to appear in print in May 1954.

"L'affaire Pomerantsev"

In order to describe the conditions in which Soviet literature developed in the last ten years, one must by rights begin with "l'affaire Pomerantsev," for this episode established a certain precedent in the official treatment of deviationists, a precedent which has continued to operate to the present day.

At first, the familiar Zhdanov circuit was traveled: a demand for humanization of literature, followed by a party outburst,[3] and then by self-criticism on the part of the editor of the wayward publication.[4] However, there were new elements which should have been obvious to potential deviationists. The first anti-Pomerantsev writings were moderate in tone, and surprisingly some students and younger Soviet intellectuals were permitted to rebut these with defenses in print,[5] so that by the time the party took action some six months later, what had at first been an "error" of a single writer had now come to be shared by a dozen.

Furthermore, the administrative measures that were finally taken were of a most unusual kind. Although Pomerantsev's article was declared to have been directed "against the foundations of our literature,"[6] the Central Committee did not interfere directly in the matter. It supported the Writers' Union resolution condemning the *Novyi mir* literary critics but did not enforce any punitive measures, largely as a result of divergencies of opinion in the collective leadership. These divergencies were not the only reason for the absence of a definitive verdict. Having abandoned mass terror, the leadership also had doubts about its ability to carry out such a verdict. Since the party feared silence or even direct resistance from the writers and did not dare gamble its full authority on condemning them, the writers had an opportunity to extend their freedom.

The Union of Writers resolution against *Novyi mir* established still another important precedent. Pomerantsev was compared with the "anti-patriotic critics—cosmopolitans and nihilists" of 1948-50,[7] but the *Novyi mir* group was represented "merely" as straying in good conscience, though far and dangerously—a mistake which should be rectified in the future. Their writings were not banned. Tvardovsky was removed from *Novyi mir* and forced to recant; yet he was not declared alien to Soviet literature as were Mikhail Zoshchenko, Anna Akhmatova, and others in the past. The liberals emerged from the first literary battle of the post-Stalin era with honor if not with glory. This new approach to "ideological errors" rather than crimes and the lack of a "Central Committee resolution on literature" became the political foundation for the creation of a "new literature" (see this author's article in the September-October 1962 issue) and for the unending dispute between liberals and dogmatists.

The Second Congress and its Aftermath

In December 1954 the Second Congress of the Writers' Union convened—the first in twenty years. It was preceded by two great discussions. The first, in which the poets Bergholtz, Aliger and Selvinski defended "self-expression," was treated in the author's previous article referred to above. The second discussion concerned the important question of methods of party

[2] See this author's article in the September-October 1962 issue of *Problems of Communism*, p. 33.

[3] "Under the Banner of Socialist Realism," by A. Surkov, *Pravda,* May 25, 1954.

[4] "For a High Ideological Content of Our Literature" (editorial), *Literaturnaia gazeta* (referred to henceforth as LG), Moscow, August 17, 1954.

[5] *Komsomolskaia pravda* (referred to henceforth as KP), Moscow, March 17, 1954.

[6] Surkov, *op. cit.*

[7] A. Surkov, "A Word of a Writer," *Oktiabr* (Moscow), No. 7, 1954.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Caption: SHORTCOMING IN CREATIVITY. This author doesn't have imagination: He didn't even imagine it necessary to ask the director to become his collaborator. . . .

—From Krokodil (Moscow), December 10, 1957.

control in literature. Everyone agreed that these methods suffered from excessive bureaucracy, embodied in the Chief Administration for Control of Entertainment and Repertoire (*Glavrepertkom*), a committee of four which was supposed to approve all Soviet plays and film scenarios. The *Glavrepertkom* was accused of having created a permanent bottleneck which permitted only a few of the manuscripts submitted to it ever to reach the stage or screen. As early as October 1953 two orthodox playwrights began to campaign for its liquidation,[8] and as a result the functions of *Glavrepertkom* were handed over to theater managers and regular censorship organs. By mid-1954 it became clear that the party intended to make the Writers' Union its chief instrument of regimentation. Although a group of notable literary figures advocated abolition of the Union, the party had no difficulty in maintaining the leading role of its main "transmission belt in literature."[9] The question of its fate did not even come up at the Second Congress.

In historical perspective, the most important achievement at this Congress was the "struggle for quality"—a subject which was widely broached for the first time, and which has remained almost the major trump card and chief slogan of the liberals. As a whole the Congress confirmed the status quo that had come into being in 1953-54. The schism between the literary bureaucrats and some of the best writers was established—the immutability of the party's ideological principles was opposed by artistic deviations from these principles. The party, as supreme arbiter, would correct "errors" and ban the more radical works of deviationists, but it would not interfere in the fate of every individual literary work. It might even cautiously support the slogan of "quality," but no amount of quality would save an artistic work if it were ideologically incorrect.

On the basis of this status quo, great changes occurred in Soviet literature during the next two and a half years. In the atmosphere of greater tolerance and hopeful anticipation, Dudintsev was writing *Not By Bread Alone,* which with the other works of the literary almanac *Literaturnaia Moskva* would constitute the political and artistic platform of the radical opposition a few months later. These works could not have been written earlier because no one could have dreamed of their ever being published and they were not meant to be kept in a locked desk drawer. Without the 1955 pause, they simply would not have been ready "on the spot" during the few short months of disarray at the top and unrest below between the 20th Congress of the CPSU in February 1956 and the expulsion of the "anti-party" group in June 1957.

The Emergence of Revisionism

These new literary trends began to emerge, then, as we have seen in Part II. At the same time lively discussions were going on in the Writers' Union club, in magazine editorial offices and in universities. Little was written about them, but this author was present on many such occasions. Normal human relations, which for many years had been disrupted through fear and suspicion, were now being slowly restored. It became possible to distinguish conservatives from liberals. For the first time broader, undogmatic views on art were publicly defended. The first cautious exchange of "revisionist" ideas, both native and imported from Poland and Hungary, took place. In the words of *Literaturnaia gazeta,* there was great talk about a "general amnesty for all ideas."[10] Even the principle of *partiinost* ("party-mindedness") came under doubt.[11] Finally,

[8] B. Lavernev and K. Pimenov, in LG, Oct. 15, 1953.

[9] B. Kaverin and others, "To Fellow Workers," LG, Oct. 26, 1954.

[10] "Keep High the Banner of Ideological Content" (editorial), LG, April 26, 1955.

[11] K. Simonov's speech at the conference of Moscow writers, LG, May 5, 1955.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1955 saw the rehabilitation of many executed writers, such as I. Babel and A. Vesyoli.

At the very end of the year, *Kommunist,* in preparing the ground for Khrushchev's campaign against Malenkov, declared that Malenkov's formula on the main manifestation of *partiinost* in art, which he had elaborated at the 19th Party Congress in October 1952, was invalid.[12] At the 20th Congress, the unmasking of the "cult of personality" and of Stalin's political methods was taken by the liberals as signifying a split with totalitarianism in general, although Khrushchev himself, in both his secret and public speeches, made it clear that this was far from being the case. The liberals, however, interpreted the 20th Congress in their own way, many going so far as to believe that they were witnessing the dying gasps of the old methods of totalitarian control in the arts. These vague hopes, and with them the formulation of new principles aimed at expanding the freedom of the individual at the expense of the state, came to be known as revisionism.

"Literature should not be the handmaiden of politics" was one of the main demands of 1956-57 revisionism. Five years later at the 22nd Party Congress, N. Gribachev accurately summed up the situation:

At that time there were advanced, sometimes by the Communists, demands for the liquidation of the party influence on literature, even demands to publish everything just as it is written, without editors, since, as one of the spokesman stated, "a writer has a right to nonsense".[13]

In such an atmosphere an attempt actually to get rid of party guardianship was only natural. Two years before that, the writers had tried to cut the party "transmission belts" by disbanding the Writers' Union. Now, under the leadership of V. Kaverin, some of them decided to set up a parallel organization independent of the powers-that-be. It was formed around the almanac *Literaturnaia Moskva* with the purpose of providing oppositionist writers with a platform for relatively free expression. It succeeded spectacularly. If 1956 as a whole was the year of social soul-searching, Kaverin's independent publication was its most articulate and radical mouthpiece. The writers' main theme was the discrepancy between the propaganda image of Soviet society, the ideals on which it is allegedly based, as well as the notions of "good society" in general, on the one hand, and Soviet reality on the other. This meant, of course, the emergence of the socio-critical school, which was depicted by this author in Part II of this series.

In 1956 the revisionists did not have enough time to create their own theory of art. Their first step was to reject "socialist realism" as bankrupt.[14] Stalinist art was criticized as narrow, dogmatic and given to "varnishing reality"—in simple language, a lie.[15] The revisionists came out for what might be termed the "Pomerantsev program"—sincerity of the writer, many-sided experimentation, search for truth in all its complexity. Soviet intellectual life might have seemed relatively free at this time, but of course, even during the months of greatest revisionist activity, the party did not back out of the literary struggle. As the works of the revisionists appeared in print, they were subjected to severe criticism.[16] Nevertheless the new literature made such a profound impression that even the conservatives recognized its "thermonuclear impact";[17] it enjoyed such wide support that it seemed that nothing could impede its development.

At the New Year's reception (1957) in the Kremlin, Khrushchev's post-Hungary defense of Stalinism as a social system, despite his criticisms of Stalin's methods, clearly reinforced the party's position over the arts. Attacks on the revisionists began to grow sharper, and in March 1957 a plenum of the board of the Moscow branch of the Writers' Union was convened. Instead of repenting, as might have been expected, the writers—on the assumption that the impact of their works had provided them with a position of strength—mounted a counteroffensive. According to *Literaturnaia gazeta,* for instance, Kaverin displayed sharp impatience toward criticism, although he himself did not moderate his utterances and even threatened to sue his opponents. Dudintsev too, did not mince words:

I think that we might be permitted to try to swim on our own like young swimmers, in the hope that we do not drown. But, alas, I always feel on myself a leash by which sometimes children are led around. And it prevents me from swimming.

Khrushchev Speaks Up

At the March plenum the group of Soviet men of letters thus openly challenged the authority of the party—an authority that had already been seriously

[12] "On the Problem of Typicality in Literature and Art" (editorial), *Kommunist,* No. 18, 1955.

[13] "Speech of Comrade N. M. Gribachev at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU," *Pravda,* October 28, 1961.

[14] See LG of November 17, 1956, and countless other papers.

[15] S. Shtut, "At the Map of Our Literature," *Novyi mir* (henceforth referred to as NM), Moscow, No. 9, 1956.

[16] See, for instance, N. Kriuchkov, "On the Novel 'Not By Bread Alone'," *Izvestia* (Moscow), Dec. 2, 1956.

[17] L. Sobolev in LG, May 22, 1957.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

damaged by the factional struggles which took place in the wake of the Hungarian and Polish "Octobers." The CPSU Presidium, however, closed ranks in the face of the direct challenge and firmly called the rebels to order. In a series of meetings between party leaders and the rebellious writers in the course of 1957, Khrushchev made speeches (released only several months later, in drastically "doctored" form),[18] threatening the writers with serious reprisals unless they mended their ways. The atmosphere of one such gathering—the Third Plenum of the administrative board of the Writers' Union, which took place in May—may be gauged from Khrushchev's own comments about it:

At that time the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the rain poured . . . and not only in the sky. It really was that way. At that time we had a big, candid, and—why deny it—sharp conversation concerning the most vital problems in the development of literature and art.[19]

This, to be sure, does not tell the whole story. According to eyewitnesses—who for understandable reasons cannot be identified here—Khrushchev shook his fist and stomped his feet. The Communist Party, he exclaimed, had drawn lessons from the Hungarian event and would not permit Soviet writers to act as the Hungarian writers had: if the Hungarian leaders had settled accounts with a dozen writers, there would have been no "counterrevolution." Let their Soviet colleagues remember that "our hand would not tremble." At this point, according to the account, the poetess Margerita Aliger fainted. *Kommunist* indirectly confirmed the reports some weeks later: "The events in Hungary have demonstrated the consequences of ignoring the Leninist principles in guiding literature and art." [20]

Khrushchev's published speeches dwelt in detail on Stalin's "positive role" and mentioned his errors only casually. He emphatically denied that Soviet literature varnished reality and asserted that, even under the late leader, Stalin prizes had been awarded to writers who reflected "what is positive in our life"; moreover, he said, the party would continue to support these very writers. But Khrushchev understood that a return to Stalinism without mass terror was impossible. Ergo, he laid down two conditions for the writers: first, Soviet reality *as a whole* must not appear too dark; second, exposing its negative side should contribute to the progress of society *in the direction in which the party leads it*. In addition, although the First Secretary emphasized that art should primarily educate the builders of communism, he did not completely reject lyrical themes and everyday life, as the extreme conservatives would have preferred. Exploration of the "world of feeling" would now be tolerated, if not welcomed. Still more important was the fact that Khrushchev did not suspect anybody of criminal intentions: at most he accused some writers of *mistakes*.

For the next few years, therefore, the idea of the consolidation of all writers on the basis of party principles became the main official slogan. What it meant was that those who had made "revisionist" errors should renounce them and expiate their guilt through "proper" creative work, while the party and the orthodox writers, in their turn, would not reproach the offenders for the past; in fact, the latter would be given the opportunity to live "normal" lives, to work, and even to enjoy the honors that the party bestowed upon its loyal followers. Furthermore, the Central Committee would not issue resolutions excommunicating the sinners (like Zoshchenko and Akhmatova in 1946).

The "Conspiracy of Silence"

The new policy amounted to an attempt to hold on to the status quo of 1954-55. Yet it also offered the writers greater hope that the measure of freedom they had won would gradually be extended in the future. It was no doubt this feeling of optimism that emboldened the writers in their struggle against the bureaucracy and inspired them, at the May 1957 plenum referred to above, to resort to what will long be remembered as a "conspiracy of silence." On the very first day of the plenum, conspicuous by their absence from the rostrum were nearly all of the well-known writers, and certainly all those prominent in the revisionist movement. Days went by, but none of those most immediately under attack spoke up, although they had often been summoned indirectly. Despite thinly-veiled threats in a speech by L. Sobolev and heavy pressure exerted behind the scenes, not one of the revisionist authors of *Novyi mir* and *Literaturnaia Moskva* spoke at the plenum. In March 1957 the party authority had been challenged loudly; now it was challenged by silence.

Because of the courage of the challengers, the May 1957 plenum sowed the seeds of an eventual retreat by the party, although the initial response, which in fact prevailed during the next one and a half to two years, was that of a "hard line". To be sure, the party did

[18] N. Khrushchev, "For a Close Tie of Literature and Art with the Life of the People," *LG*, August 28, 1957.
[19] N. Khrushchev, "Toward New Successes in Literature and Art," *Kommunist*, No. 7, 1961.
[20] "For Leninist Principleness in Questions of Literature and Art" (editorial), *Kommunist*, No. 10, 1957, p. 15.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not attempt to direct every detail of literary activity, nor did it put under suspicion of treason even the most extreme oppositionists, as had been done in Stalin's time; but both these thankless tasks were assigned to the old and new conservatives in editorial and administrative positions. The party openly protected the clique of militant reactionaries headed by L. Sobolev and V. Kochetov, who had advanced themselves in the post-Stalin period. In his anti-revisionist novel (or shall we say pamphlet?), *The Brothers Yershov,* Kochetov had equated even the most modest liberalism with counter-revolution.

The creation of a new organization—the Union of Writers of the RSFSR—was entrusted to these arch-conservatives. Officially, the Union was merely an organization of writers of the Russian Federation, but actually it was created by the administrative apparatus to struggle against revisionism and liberalism with the assistance of weak and obedient provincial writers.

In October-November of 1958, the Pasternak storm broke. The campaign against the Nobel prize laureate did not differ from the most spiteful and hysterical campaigns of the Zhdanov era except that, in comparing Pasternak to a pig,[21] the typical vulgarity of the new Khrushchevian style was expressed. The conservatives' purpose was clear: they used the *Doctor Zhivago* affair to create an atmosphere of fear among the writers. For example, contact with Pasternak and circulating his manuscript caused two young poets to be expelled from the Komsomol and sent to the virgin lands.[22]

In such an atmosphere the constituent congress of the RSFSR Union of Writers convened in December 1958 after fifteen months of preparation by the extreme reactionaries. No one would have been surprised if, as in Stalin's time, it had turned into an orgy of confession. However, nothing of the kind took place. Instead, what occurred was a broadening of the "conspiracy of silence" on the part of most of the first-rate writers. Their reaction to a year and a half of being bullied had proven the reverse of what the terrorizers had anticipated: in the face of the threat of literary "re-Zhdanovization," they had shown a far greater solidarity even than in 1956-57. The "hard policy" had thus turned out to be a two-edged sword. True, it could suppress open revisionism; but the majority of writers except the hard-core conservatives had simply tried to avoid active participation in the organizational work of the literary unions. In other words, the "transmission belts" stopped transmitting, and excessively harsh control of literature threatened to become its opposite—the absence of control.

And so, the party leaders learned their lesson from the "conspiracy of silence": total submission of the writers could not be achieved without physical terror. Further, the Pasternak affair taught them that if they were not able to cut off a writer's contact with the outside world unless they threatened him with death, the courage of that one writer, put in the position of an outcast with nothing to lose, could cause considerable damage to their prestige. Yet, if a writer could be attracted by concessions, then the risk of such "Pasternak affairs" might be lessened in the future, if not eliminated. The party therefore decided that the tough policy of suppressing open revisionism had been overplayed, at least temporarily. The comparative moderation of the literary bureaucrats at the RSFSR Congress of Writers was an expression of the new course.

Setback for the Conservatives

As always with a shift in policy, the party got rid of those "guilty" of carrying out yesterday's orders. Now, however, they were merely removed from key positions and not sent to concentration camps as in the old days. In March 1959, for example, the arch-conservative V. Kochetov was removed from his post as editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaia gazeta.* And at the Third All-Union Congress of Writers in May 1959, the chief overseer of Soviet literature, A. Surkov, was sacrificed on the altar of reconciliation. This No. 1 anti-revisionist was replaced as First Secretary of the Union of Writers by Konstantin Fedin, who still occupies that post. Unlike Surkov, Fedin is not an *apparatchik,* but a writer, a brilliant though superficial stylist and an intellectual of the old school who has adapted himself to the Soviet regime. Fedin may be characterized as the most moderate of liberals, and his appointment should have facilitated a reconciliation of the opposition with the Union.

But despite all concessions, the opposition did not make peace. The "conspiracy of silence" partially continued: many important oppositionists refused to appear on the podium of the Third Congress—Ehrenburg, Simonov, Aliger, Dudintsev, Kaverin and others, all of whom had appeared at the Second Congress in 1954 (with the exception of the then still unknown Dudintsev). Even more interesting was the fact that those "liberals" who did decide to speak by no means accepted unequivocally the conditions offered them. In

[21] See the speech of the First Secretary of the Komsomol in the presence of Khrushchev, KP, October 30, 1958.

[22] *The First Constituent Congress of Writers of the Russian Federation. Stenographic Report.* Moscow, 1959. Speech of S. V. Simonov, p. 381, and speech of A. Kovalenkov, p. 485.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contrast to the official theme of the congress—the creation of works on a contemporary theme in Khrushchev's spirit of "strengthening the ties of literature with the life of the people"—they advocated artistic quality and craftsmanship. This was exemplified by the speech of Semyon Kirsanov, one of the chief heroes of 1956 and author of the poem "The Seven Days of the Week." [23] In contrast to the "silent ones," he admitted in the most general terms the correctness of party criticism; however, his speech was devoted not to what the party considered most important—contemporary life—but to a severe criticism of the state of literary affairs. He stated:

Our discussions about raising the level of artistic craftsmanship have the character of incantations. Actually we are faced with two serious obstacles. The first is the systematic propaganda of bad and mediocre works and the unrestrained praise of stereotyped novels, short stories, poems and verses without individuality. The criterion of quality is lost. The second obstacle is the critics' constant and frequent rebukes to writers and poets who want to use colors in the spectrum other than grey. This is sometimes called naturalism, sometimes formalism; we have many terms for this. Is this lack of tolerance for novelty, for the unexpected, for daring and sharp description, really necessary for communism? I think not.[24]

In this attack on Stalinist greyness, Kirsanov was supported by Tvardovsky, the editor of *Novyi mir,* whose speech resounded with a real sense of crisis and with the stubborn determination of the liberals to change the situation:

We can no longer live like this—we must say to our literary yesterday and even to our literary today—we will not live like this. . . . In the sphere of spiritual activity, in particular literature and art, the preference is always only for quality.[25]

The majority of literary propagandists, bewildered by the concessions made to the liberals and confused by the fall of yesterday's pillars of power, A Surkov and V. Kochetov, preferred to rehash the latest Central Committee directives, pretending that no opposition existed.

The speech of "the best friend of Soviet literature" (the new title given to Nikita Khrushchev) was contradictory to the *n*th degree and can scarely be explained by the peculiarities of his personal thought processes. Rather, his inconsistency reflected the extraordinary ambiguity of the position which the party was forced to assume in the face of unceasing literary opposition: on the one hand, it lured the writer with the carrot of concessions and vague promises of a better future; on the other, it drove them with the stick of threats and with neo-Stalinist slogans constantly repeated by the conservative elements. Playing on both hope and intimidation, the party counted on obtaining from the writers something that would be real art and also would educate the "masses" in the required spirit instead of "corrupting" them.

Tug of War

From the spring of 1959 to the spring of 1962, a balance of power prevailed in Soviet literature. The literary renaissance continued; the liberals gradually succeeded in taking over some editorial-administrative positions: for example, they became dominant in the propaganda bureau for artistic literature, which organized appearances of writers before mass audiences. As a result, Ye Yevtushenko, A Voznesensky and many other poets appeared in public and strengthened their fame and popularity. The publication of the "Short Literary Encyclopedia" was also undertaken by the liberals; in it the majority of Stalinist writers received highly uncomplimentary evaluations while social criticism and avant-garde poetry were cautiously defended.

On the other hand, every significant work of new literature and every step forward by the progressives evoked a bitter response from the conservatives. The entire history of these three years is one of unending skirmishes between the "leftists" and "rightists," both in the evaluation of individual works and on general questions. The difficult goal which the party set for itself was to avoid abandoning the conservatives, who were politically compromised and creatively impotent, while not permitting either too much hopelessness or too much hope in the liberal circles. In order to achieve this, the party armed itself in the literary "cold war" with the tactic well known to Western diplomats—"blowing hot and cold."

Among the most interesting developments during this period was an interview which Ilya Ehrenburg gave to the extreme "right" newspaper *Literatura i zhizn.* His radical, straightforward and unequivocal repudiation of the esthetic foundations of Soviet art probably has no equal in all of post-Stalin polemics. According to Ehrenburg, the subject matter has no significance in real literature. "A writer can be inspired by the building of a huge dam and by the first wail of a child." And this at a time when the party insisted on books about

---

[23] See excerpt in *Problems of Communism,* January-February 1958, p. 34.

[24] *Third Congress of Writers of the USSR. Stenographic Report.* Moscow, 1959. Speech by S. Kirsanov, pp. 97-98.

[25] Speech by A. Tvardovsky, *ibid.,* p. 202.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

contemporary life! "The secrets of the human heart, the region of emotions" Ehrenburg considered to be within the compass of literature—as though he had never heard of the "magnificent feats of labor by the Soviet people" as the basic subject. Speaking about the "spiritual impoverishment of people working on the perfection of complex machines," he contrasted the official thesis that "art must educate builders of communism" with his own thesis that "art must spiritually enrich." Said Ehrenburg:

Leo Tolstoy astounds us most of all in those works which do not try to instruct. . . . From a practical standpoint, what are we taught by Pushkin's poem "I remember a wonderful moment"? You can hardly answer that question easily. In my opinion it spiritually enriches a person.

The long interview concluded with a call to art "which is authentic and human, which does not record life or rewrite what has been written."[26]

If the conservative *Literatura i zhizn* opened its pages to such heretical statements, it was of course not done out of sympathy for them. On the contrary, there was an element of provocation in the journal's invitation to Ehrenburg. He was asked questions which he could not refuse to answer: he could either repeat commonplaces and thereby capitulate, or he could openly proclaim an oppositionist program at the risk of a great scandal. Ehrenburg took the risk, but the provocation failed. Agitprop refused to take notice of the interview, at least publicly, and the conservatives did not achieve their aim of causing a scandal which would intimidate the liberals.

Literatura i zhizn then openly attacked the leftists, especially their fundamental slogan of artistic quality. While it did not deny the need for quality, two of its leading contributors protested that several editorial staffs were rejecting manuscripts which were "ideologically and politically correct" merely because they were not "outstanding." In their opinion, everything "correct" should be published. Alexander Tvardovsky, conveniently quoting certain parts of Khrushchev's recent declarations, retorted to this by calling the authors of the *Literatura i zhizn* article "conscious opponents of the party's decisions in questions of literature" (entirely unjustified), and accusing them of "preaching greyness and mediocrity" (more than justified).[27]

An endless debate then broke out in the press, with most of the protagonists repeating previous arguments. On January 9, 1960, *Pravda* published a decree of the Central Committee on "strengthening propaganda, educational and agitational work," which among other things was directed against nonconformist elements in the Soviet intelligentsia. As though anticipating this, *Literaturnaia gazeta* at the end of November, two and one half months after printing Tvardovsky's article, had criticized itself for underestimating "the ideological position of the writer as the decisive factor in evaluating a work of art."[28] This was a retreat, but the newspaper did not reject the chief requisite—artistry.

The end of the debate came only in July 1960, when Mikhail Suslov spoke at the traditional summer meeting of party leaders and writers. The fact that on this occasion the most dogmatic member of the leadership spoke shows clearly how the ideological temperature had dropped after the January decree. As expected, Suslov supported *Literatura i zhizn,* calling for a "solicitous attitude toward writers who portray new phenomena in life"—that is, depict life as the party wanted it to be depicted—even though their works were artistically imperfect. This was a direct denial of quality as the most important thing in literature.[29]

The resolution of the quarrel in favor of the conservatives did not, however, signify their final victory. The promulgation of a policy line, even by Suslov, no longer meant its absolute realization. In the first place, it could be resisted by taking advantage of differences of opinion within the party leadership. Secondly, the

[26] Ilya Ehrenburg, "Laws of Art," *Literatura i zhizn* (henceforth referred to as LiZ), Moscow, August 16, 1959.
[27] A. Tvardovsky in LG, Sept. 10, 1959.
[28] LG, November 21, 1959.
[29] *Pravda,* July 18, 1960.

The Party's Position

Sometimes they [the writers and men of the arts] say: Let us create as we wish, do not force injunctions upon us, do not restrict us. Hence the demand for art shows without juries, books without editors, the artist's right to display, without intermediaries, anything he wishes. Here we have essentially nothing but an attempt to obtain an utterly unrestricted opportunity to force upon the people a swollen, subjectivist arbitrariness. . . . It is the great fortune of our art that the party, expressing the vital interests of the people and basing its entire activity on the most progressive Weltanschauung, *determines the tasks and direction of art.*

—From a speech of CPSU Central Committee Secretary L. F. Ilyichev to writers and artists, Pravda, December 22, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

policy could be quietly sabotaged, without coming out against it directly. The virtual sabotage of neo-Stalinist directives became the basic tactic of the liberals after the Third Congress.

What Price Creativity?

Within the limits of the party's tolerance, some opportunities were found for creative work, for a broadening of themes, and for experimentation with form. The slogan of the time became the title of a poem by M. Aliger, "Write!" Write and don't quarrel, because a work of art is by nature ambiguous, vague, and at the same time particularly convincing, whereas a polemical article is always too precise and therefore vulnerable. Write and confront the powers-that-be with the *fait accompli* of a novel or poem which is more difficult to reject than even the most refined theory. Thus, until the 22nd Party Congress, the frontal attack on the official aesthetics gave way to a flanking movement. But all this should not be taken too literally. The liberals did not completely withdraw from all debates; they merely took part in some of them with a greater show of caution.

One such debate which began in 1959 and continues to the present time has been between the "physicists and lyricists"—terms taken from the lines by the poet Boris Slutsky: "Somehow physicists are honored, somehow lyricists are out of favor."[30] Echoing at times the discussion in the West about "the two cultures," the main theme of the debate is whether art or, more broadly, "useless" humanitarian culture has a place in the life of industrial man. For the conservatives, culture equals the official ideology, whereas for the liberals contemporary Soviet culture, most of all art, does not satisfy those human demands which it ought to satisfy. As Ehrenburg implied, art and culture should spiritually enrich man, and youth should be educated esthetically, not ideologically and politically.[31] For those of us who are observing the literary situation in post-Stalinist Russia, one result of this debate should be clear: it has shown that prohibiting "real" art evoked not only a heightened interest in it, but also a fundamentally anti-esthetic reaction.

Another great debate which developed after the Third Congress of Writers and which also has not yet been resolved concerns tradition, innovation, and contemporary style—questions which had not been raised for a long time. Everything is clear for the "socialist realists," at least in theory: tradition is Russian realism; contemporary style is writing like Tolstoy, only better; and innovation, in the words of a *Pravda* editorial, consists of "Communist ideology and the affirmation in life of the beautiful and the human, directed toward the strengthening and perfection of communism."[32] Up until 1959 the avant-garde clearly contradicted this theory in its literary efforts. But in 1959 *Literaturnaia gazeta* began to publish writings by poets and prose writers, mostly young people, who stood for "a contemporary" rhythm and rhyme in verse, and a contemporary "polished" prose. The conservatives replied to all this with accusations of "formalism," imitation of Russian decadence and the bourgeois West, and "following the fashion."

The party had not interfered directly in the debate of the "physicists" and "lyricists," but it entered with an iron hand into the polemics about innovation and tradition. Ideologists of the Suslov type well remembered that the party had established real control over literature only when it began to dictate form to writers. Freedom of form is perhaps more dangerous for Agitprop than social criticism within the limits of legalized naturalism, for it destroys the very style of totalitarianism and gives the artists the opportunity to enter a sphere in which the narrow and vulgar official esthetics does not know how to act. Harsh organizational measures were taken to cut off the debate on "contemporary style." The editor of *Literaturnaia gazeta,* S. Smirnov, was reminded of former sins in the debate on quality and of new sins in having offered a tribune to the formalists, and was removed from his post on December 15, 1960. Moreover, Agitprop decided that the militant conservatives should be given wider opportunities, and in February 1961 handed over the magazine *Oktiabr* to Kochetov, who had not controlled a press medium of his own for two years.

By the spring of 1961 the position of the "rightists" had strengthened so alarmingly that one of the leading representatives of the liberal camp frankly said in a private conversation in the West, "We are all hanging on a thread." However, in May of that year Khrushchev personally restored the balance of power. His article "For New Successes in Literature and Art," published in the May issue of *Kommunist,* was a condensation of his remarks at the same 1960 meeting at which Suslov had spoken. But, characteristically, the article did not appear at the time the neo-Stalinist wave was on the

[30] B. Slutsky, "Physicists and Lyricists," LG, Oct. 13, 1959.
[31] I. Ehrenburg, "About the Moon, Earth and Heart," LG, January 1, 1960.
[32] "The 22nd Congress and Problems of Ideological Work" (editorial), *Pravda,* March 23, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rise; it was published only when the time came to stop that wave.

In the first place, Khrushchev stated that the party was "satisfied" with the activity of the writers, thus cutting the ground from under the conservatives, who maintained that the situation was not satisfactory as long as the liberals were active in literature. Secondly, Khrushchev again confirmed the moderate course. To be sure, he spoke vigorously about "irreconcilability in defending ideological and political principles," about how "the development of literature and art in socialist society proceeds not in an anarchistic way but is directed by the party," and he threatened those "individuals" who "dislike" this. However, the main point of his article was not the repetition of well-known truths, but his statement that "in our conditions there are opportunities to correct those who have made mistakes without resorting to extreme measures." From a practical standpoint this meant that those "who made mistakes" which the party disliked would continue to "make mistakes." Moreover, in anticipation of this, Khrushchev admitted their right to mistakes, saying: "We must bear in mind that failures in work, especially in artistic creation, can take place among those who serve the people loyally and faithfully." Thus, nothing was to prevent the liberals from "not noticing" specific directives and ascribing their "inattention" to earlier administrative errors. The events of the months that followed confirmed the correctness of this interpretation of Khrushchev's article.

The Yevtushenko Episode

It was stated earlier that the liberals achieved broader freedom for artistic creation by declining to argue their theoretical correctness and instead adopting the slogan of "write!" Similarly, by discussing specific writers, they began to gain victories in the area of critical polemics. The first such victory came with Yevtushenko, who at this time reached the zenith of his popularity. He reached it not only because his poetry, as he himself said, "is a continuation of the very same thoughts and discussions" of youth,[33] but also thanks to his great acting talent, so clearly displayed in his recitations. Yevtushenko has a charismatic appeal and an unlimited power over the crowd. It was impossible to ignore a poet who could fill the Luzhniki stadium, or to continue to dismiss him with such abusive words as "decadent" or "dandy." It was obvious that to condemn Yevtushenko would be to condemn most of the young intelligentsia.

[33] Ye. Yevtushenko, "My Russia," *Obesrver* (London), May 27, 1962.

On the other hand, by the end of 1960 Yevtushenko himself was departing from his former irreconcilable opposition. His poems on Cuba and Paris, if not entirely orthodox, were useful in Agitprop work.[34]

In the beginning of 1961, *Novyi mir* tried to place Yevtushenko and the even more leftist poet A. Voznesensky on the Soviet Parnassus as gifted poets. This provoked the usual rebuff from the reactionaries. However, by midsummer, one moderate conservative, while not accepting both poets completely, was forced to analyze seriously the real reasons for their popularity ("the unquenched spiritual demands of the reader"). He attempted to discern in their creative work elements which at least did not directly contradict orthodoxy, and he expressed the hope that these elements would be intensified. The extreme conservatives, to be sure, considered such an attitude too indulgent, but they also expressed cautious hope for the reform at least of Yevtushenko. ("It would be worth suspending judgment on Yevtushenko to see where he goes creatively, rather than hurry to make a fuss about his old poems." [35])

It is uncertain how all this might have ended if the matter of *Babi Yar* had not occurred.[36] Though no more "oppositionist" than many others of Yevtushenko's poems, *Babi Yar* produced great international repercussions because of its theme—*i.e.*, criticism of Soviet disregard for the specifically anti-Jewish direction of Nazism, condemnation of anti-Semitic sentiments in some quarters in Russia, and deep compassion for the centuries-old suffering of the Jewish people. With this poem, the world fame of Yevtushenko was established, and the repercussions were intensified by the reaction of the conservatives. The latter were outraged by Yevtushenko's emphasis on the anti-Semitism of the Nazis when the official view of Nazism primarily stressed its anti-Communist, anti-Soviet and anti-Slavic animus; they also were insulted by his comparing Nazi anti-Semitism with the anti-Semitism of Russian reactionaries. Yevtushenko was attacked and branded as a "pygmy" and "cosmopolite" who "has forgotten his people" and "has spat upon his dead." [37] This was an all-out attempt to expose Yevtushenko as an enemy and eliminate him from literature despite Khrushchev's state-

[34] Ye. Yevtushenko, "Poems About Cuba," *Yunost* (Moscow), No. 12, 1960; "Poems About Paris," LG, January 23, 1961.

[35] A. Dimshits in LG, July 4, 1961.

[36] The poem appeared first in LG, Sept. 19, 1961. See translation by Max Hayward in this journal, issue of March-April 1962, p. 57.

[37] D. Starikov, "About a Certain Poem," and A. Markov, "My Answer," LiZ, Sept. 27, 1961.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ments about the "good intentions" even of erring writers and the inapplicability of extreme judgments and measures under the new conditions. If the ploy had succeeded, it would have meant the beginning of the rout of the liberal camp. But it failed.

Several days after the start of the general attack on Yevtushenko, *Komsomolskaia pravda* (October 4, 1961) printed an article in which *Babi Yar* was criticized, but in a moderate tone; the basic approach was not to destroy Yevtushenko but to tame him by pointing out those elements in his work that were favorable from the party's viewpoint. The denouement of the drama took place behind the scenes and has been revealed to the author of this article by an unofficial but absolutely trustworthy source. The problem of *Babi Yar* was discussed in the apparatus of the party Central Committee and was resolved by a decision to reprimand the editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaia gazeta* for printing a "politically harmful, speculative" poem, but also to remove the editor-in-chief of *Literatura i zhizn* for his "disgraceful answer to Yevtushenko, which was undignified for Soviet writers-internationalists." Evidently the affair was not settled without a fight in the Central Committee. But the supporters of a return to a hard policy, who had inspired the article in *Literatura i zhizn,* lost the fight primarily because the members of the Central Committee could not imagine how they could impose such a policy on the writers without resorting to terror. The "*Babi Yar* affair" was ordered closed even to the extent of forbidding any mention of it, and in the Yevtushenko anthology *Wave of the Hand (Vzmakh ruki*), published in 1962, the poem was not included.

On the other hand, no attempt was made to force the poet to recant. At a conference of young poets a few days after the publication of *Babi Yar,* Yevtushenko defended his usual views. This was only a partial victory for him, but it was a crushing defeat for the "die-hards." They had counted on retribution at best and on preservation of the status quo at worst. It turned out differently. Disturbed by the feeble attacks of the conservatives, who merely offered "food for bourgeois propaganda" and further increased the popularity of the liberals within the country without doing them much harm, the Central Committee clearly demonstrated that it considered the publication of an opposition poem less of a sin than the fruitless censure of its author. The status quo was thus upset in favor of the liberals. Moreover, Yevtushenko gained a great deal personally: the approach "not to destroy but to tame" him became dominant in the succeeding months. For the conservatives the lesson of *Babi Yar* was more than clear: it showed how far the erosion of their once unlimited power had gone. Not only were they unable to prevent the appearance of a work distasteful to them, but they were not even able to have it censured.

The 22nd Congress

At the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961, the "rightists" attempted to regain at least part of their lost position. But the new de-Stalinization upset the conservatives' plans and created an unfavorable atmosphere for them. Two conservative speakers—N. Gribachev and V. Kochetov [38] — expressed their dissatisfaction with the current trend of Soviet literature and demanded that changes be made in the ruling personnel of literary publishing houses and organizations in order to assure conformism in writing. They spoke out against revisionism, liberal trends, growing ideological dissonances, and increasing interest in the inner world of man in place of the theme of Communist construction. Ehrenburg and Yevtushenko were personally attacked. The explanation for these ideological transgressions was foreign bourgeois influence. The cure, they said, was administrative interference—the banning of ideologically unsuitable literature.

However, voices other than those of the conservatives were heard at the Party Congress. Of course the avant-garde was not permitted to speak out, but Tvardovsky, editor-in-chief of *Novyi mir,* by nature a moderate liberal, spoke with such breadth of view and tolerance, and at the same time with such principled hostility to cultural Stalinism, that one may say his speech was the most radical at this meeting of inveterate *apparatchiks*.[39]

In contrast to the Stalinists, Tvardovsky said nothing about the "glorious traditions of socialist realism" or about correct ideological direction. He defended the liberal point of view: the most important thing in a work of art is the art itself; where there is no "artistic quality," all good intentions are worth nothing. He also spoke out against "varnishing" reality, thus clashing not only with the Stalinists but also with Khrushchev, who had declared his opposition to this revisionist concept at the Third Writers' Congress.

Sholokhov's speech cannot be labeled either conservative or liberal; it was a wholly peculiar phenomenon. Outwardly it was servile, full of exaggerated praise for Khrushchev; but in essence it was independent and insulting to the powers-that-be. Its compliments for the Minister of Culture, Furtseva, were phrased in such

[38] Gribachev's speech was printed in *Pravda* of October 28, 1961, and Kochetov's speech in the same newspaper, Oct. 31.
[39] See *Pravda,* October 29, 1961.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a way that the praise sounded like mockery and caused laughter in the hall.[40]

Thus, there was an open clash of various points of view on literature at the 22nd Congress. For the first time the conservatives did not receive the decisive support of the party in the discussion of general questions of literary policy. The liberals took a great stride forward with the election of Tvardovsky as a candidate member of the Central Committee. Now they could begin to think about eliminating their opponents on the battlefield of the "cold war." Such thoughts would have been suicidal fantasy two or three years earlier, but in pursuit of his own political goals Khrushchev created a heated anti-Stalinist atmosphere at the 22nd Party Congress. The conservatives were nonplussed by these liberal trends, and some began to panic, including the critic V. Pertsov and A. Sofronov, one of the pillars of conservatism. The Congress was the turning point at which the Stalinist reaction lost faith in its ultimate omnipotence.

Continuing Battles

The erosion of the party's power over cultural matters manifested itself in the literary "affair" of V. Aksenov, V. Rozov and the magazine *Yunost* (Youth), which was discussed at the first post-congress plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers.

For some five or six years, *Yunost* had been one of the most progressive organs in print, publishing mainly avant-garde material. The appearance of Aksenov's story *Ticket to the Stars* and Rozov's scenario *ABC*[41] had evoked the indignation of the conservatives. Both authors showed young people rebelling against society and their elders. Although the heroes in both cases ended up on the "correct Communist road," the happy endings were far less convincing than the youths' rebellion. Also, Aksenov touched on a theme that was a sore spot for the party—the departure of some young people from communism. This was the heart of the matter.

Despite a favorable commentary in *Literaturnaia gazeta,* many conservative reviews—with such eloquent titles as "Phony Ticket" and "Ticket—but to where?"—reflected the opinion that *Yunost* had erred in publishing Aksenov's story. The editor-in-chief, Valentin Kataev, paid for the error with his job and was replaced by the conservative hack, Boris Polevoi. This attempt

[40] *Ibid.,* October 25, 1961.

[41] Aksenov's story appeared in *Yunost,* Nos. 6-7, 1961; Rozov's scenario appeared in the same monthly, No. 9, 1961.

Two Writers—Two Views

THE READER IS sorely in need of the whole truth. He is annoyed at evasion and subterfuge on the part of the artist. . . . When a writer asserts today that the cup is full to the brim or even brimming over, he will get nothing but ridicule from his annoyed reader. . . .

Writers are called the party's closest helpers—this is a high title that carries with it many duties, but it may be understood in different ways. There are some who think that to be "a helper of the party" means merely to go along with the party, "using literary media" to illustrate the various proposals of the party, the tasks it defines in economy and production. In practice it works out something like this: "The bright rays of the setting sun were still painting with gold the tops of the birch trees around the cottages of the Path to Communism kolkhoz when Grunya, the dairymaid, having calculated all the factors, resolved to obtain from her cows *x* litres of milk above the quantity required by her commitments." (*Laughter. Applause.*) Perhaps it is not always as primitive as all that, but that is what the "literary form" of the illustrative method actually boils down to. Its unsoundness is obvious.

—*A. Tvardovsky at the 22nd Party Congress,* Soviet Literature (Moscow), No. 1, 1962.

COMRADE KHRUSHCHEV categorically rejected the term "varnisher", with which esthetes among the critics tried to label writers who gladly, proudly, and at the bidding of their hearts, devoted their pens to service in the party's cause. These writers are no longer called that today. Thank you very much for your help and support, Nikita Sergeyevich! However, the esthetes have trumped up something new . . .: they either shroud in a conspiracy of silence books that incur their displeasure, or snobbishly slight them, or simply classify them as being of "small artistic worth." They may say that about a novel relating of virgin-land dwellers. A book about the deeds and thoughts of Stavropol kolkhozniks who wanted to remold their villages was adjudged "unworthy of attention, parochial, and shallow". . . .

Provided we adhere faithfully to the method of socialist realism, keep loyal to party principles, and be with the people—and we have no intention of straying from these positions—blunders are scarcely likely. . . . We have always been and always will be the party's trusty helpers in all its great projects and great accomplishments. (*Applause.*)

—*V. Kochetov at the 22nd Party Congress, ibid.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the conservatives to regain power proved weak, however. Aksenov openly challenged party leadership by publicly declaring, "You won't push us from our path." Shortly thereafter he was assigned by *Izvestia's* editor, Adzhubei, to Sakhalin. Upon his return in July, *Novyi mir* printed two news stories by him, even more oppositionist in tone: they concerned the unfortunate lot of Soviet workers in the Far East, the human baseness of "leaders of production," and the aimless existence of a young Muscovite who finally discovers a goal in life in his own daughter, and not in the building of communism.[42] In the face of Aksenov's personal courage, the conservatives were powerless, in spite of all the external power of their newspaper and magazine apparatus. To be sure, they had taken over *Yunost,* but they had deepened the opposition of a writer extremely popular among the youth and could not force him into silence while the two camps existed.

Between January and April of 1962, events unfolded favorably for the liberals. Khrushchev ordered that the ban on *Pages from Tarussa* be lifted. Not a word of this appeared in the Soviet press, but reports from Moscow literary circles reached the West by various channels. It is not surprising that in such an atmosphere

[42] NM, No. 7, 1961.

From a Poet's Notebook

Below are two of a group of five verses by the Soviet poet Boris Slutsky, recently published in *Izvestia* (November 24, 1962). Though some of the verses were written as long ago as 1954-55, this is their first appearance in the Soviet press. The translations (with minor alterations) are from *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* New York, December 26, 1962, p. 19.

Хозяин

А мой хозяин не любил меня —
Не знал меня, не слышал и не видел,
А все-таки боялся, как огня,
И сумрачно, угрюмо ненавидел.
Когда меня он плакать заставлял,
Ему казалось· я притворно плачу.
Когда пред ним я голову склонял,
Ему казалось: я усмешку прячу.
А я всю жизнь работал на него,
Ложился поздно, поднимался рано.
Любил его. И за него был ранен.
Но мне не помогало ничего.
А я возил с собой его портрет.
В землянке вешал и в палатке
вешал —
Смотрел, смотрел,
не уставал смотреть.
И с каждым годом мне все реже,
реже
Обидною казалась нелюбовь.
И ныне настроенья мне не губит
Тот явный факт, что испокон веков
Таких, как я, хозяева не любят.

1954

***

Пора заканчивать стихи.
Пора дописывать баллады.
А новых начинать — не надо.
Пора достраивать дворцы,
Пора — отделки и отчистки.
Пора — разборки и расчистки.
Пора мечты осуществить.
Да, без сомненья и шатанья
Взять и осуществить мечтанья.

1962

The Boss

My boss had no love for me—
Did not know me, hear or see me,
And yet he had a deathly fear of me,
And gloomily, sullenly hated me.
Whenever he would make me weep,
He thought that I was acting.
When I would bow my head to him,
He thought I was hiding a sneer.
And I worked my whole life for him,
Late to bed, and rising early.
I loved him. And for him was wounded.
But it was all to no avail.
I carried his picture around with me.
Hung it in dugout and
in tent—
Kept gazing at it, gazing,
never tiring of gazing.
But less and less as the years
went by
Did his dislike distress me.
And now it upsets me not a bit to recognize
The patent fact that from the start of time
Bosses bore no love for such as I.

1954

* *
*

Time for winding up the verses.
Time to bring the ballads to a close.
No need to make a start on any new ones.
Time to top off the palaces,
Time for trimming and for cleaning up,
Time to dismantle and to clear away.
Time to bring the dreams to pass.
Yes, with neither doubt nor hesitation—
To get to work and bring the dreams to pass.

1962

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the liberals attempted to influence the writers' organizations, the traditional conservative stronghold. Regular elections to the administrative board of the Moscow branch of the RSFSR Writers' Union were held on April 4 and 5. One week later, *Literaturnaia gazeta* announced that Yevtushenko, Voznesensky, Slutsky and other "leftists," who only two or three years before had barely been tolerated in this Writers' Union, had been elected to the board.

Another sensational aspect of the election was omitted in Soviet press references but was reported by Michel Tatu, Moscow correspondent of *Le Monde*.[43] Kochetov, Sofronov and Gribachev were not even proposed for reelection, so clear was it beforehand that they would lose. Six hundred persons took part in the secret balloting, and the results showed that N. Abalkin, literary editor of *Pravda*, and L. Sobolev, chairman of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union, had been blackballed along with others. The situation was truly paradoxical: Sobolev had been ousted from the board of the Moscow branch of the organization of which he was central board chairman. After the elections, according to Tatu, the first secretary of the Moscow city committee, Demichev, called upon the writers to forget their quarrels, not to create literary scandals, and to put their own house in order. This speech also went unreported in the USSR.

The conservatives, however, refused to reconcile themselves to their defeat. A meeting of the secretariat of the RSFSR Writers' Union took place in May at Rostov-on-Don, a site purposely selected for the counterattack since it is a traditional conservative stronghold. Yet the accusations leveled against the liberals at this meeting only served to increase their prestige and popularity.

During the spring and summer of 1962, the articles and literary works in *Novyi mir* became more and more daring. The magazine *Znamia* shifted considerably to the "left." The "cold war" was now conducted in the pages of *Novyi mir*, *Literaturnaia gazeta* and *Literatura i zhizn*, with each camp printing destructive reviews of the other's significant works.

In the fall of 1962, Khrushchev renewed the struggle against dogmatism for various external and internal political considerations, going so far as to call it almost as dangerous as revisionism. The literary season opened in September with a plenum of the board of the RSFSR Writers' Union, at which one of the most significant developments in literary policy of recent years took place—a declaration of complete amnesty for the new generation of writers, clearly on orders from above. In May *Literatura i zhizn* had all but labeled the latter as corrupters of the politically immature; in October the same journal wrote:

Are the young writers ready to take over from the old generation and to go forward with honor? The plenum answered unanimously: yes, they are ready. The young people themselves spoke out about this, not only at the plenum but *in all their works*. . . . Young literature is working for communism and it is good that the need to "declare war" against even the slightest evidence of lack of faith in the literary youth was brought out at the plenum.[44] (author's italics)

The two main speeches at the plenum by Shim and Sobolev were directed against the conservative interpretation of young writers' works:

The opinion of some of our critics that young literature is nihilistic and polemical in its attitude to the revolutionary past is profoundly untrue and reflects the inability of some comrades to understand the essence of the real literary process.[45]

And again:

Young poets do not run counter to the Soviet poetry of older generations, but rather are new branches of the eternally green tree of Russian Soviet poetry.

The main speakers generally ignored the anti-totalitarian elements of the new literature that had previously been called "errors." Even Aksenov, who had been condemned by the head of Agitprop a few months earlier, was pardoned. All discussion of controversial issues was carefully couched in terms acceptable both to the young writers and to the party leadership; speakers used such phrases as "the clarity of life's goal, the high degree of humanism," etc., while the terms "socialist realism" and *"partiinost"* were generally omitted. The plenum is best summed up in the words of B. Akhmadulina:

I think that the time has become happy for us, that it now runs in our favor. . . . Not only can my comrades work, but they are encouraged by every means in their endeavor.[46]

New Gains, Uncertain Future

The development of events after the September plenum was extraordinarily favorable for the liberals. Yevtushenko and Aksenov were appointed to the *Yunost* editorial board. (Heaven only knows how they

[43] M. Tatu, "Conformistes et progressistes aux prises chez les écrivains de la capitale," *Le Monde* (Paris), April 17, 1962.

[44] LiZ, October 3, 1962.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] LG, October 2, 1962.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are going to get along with that old glorifier of the ideal *apparatchik,* that apostle of unquestioning submission to the party, Polevoi, the editor-in-chief!) Other young writers were appointed to fairly responsible posts in various publishing houses and editorial boards. *Izvestia* (October 28, 1962) printed Paustovsky's rebuff to two conservative criticisms of Bondarev's new novel *Quietude. Komsomolskaia pravda* came out against conservative tendencies in *Yunost*[47] and also printed some unorthodox and "formalistic" poems by Voznesensky for the first time in years.[48] Examples of "underground" literature appeared to a certain extent (see box on p. 56).

On October 21 *Pravda* published Yevtushenko's poem about Stalin, which attacked not only the dead dictator but also his still living and active followers. The November issue of *Novyi mir* published A. Solzhenitsyn's novel, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* which for the first time unfolded for Soviet readers the terrible panorama of concentration-camp life. Also published were the diaries of the famous film director, A. Dovzhenko, relating the external limitations and internal sufferings of an artist under totalitarianism.[49] The main conservative organ, *Literatura i zhizn,* was ordered closed as of January 1, 1963, and the conservative critic R. Elsberg was excluded from the Writers' Union as a "provocateur and voluntary informer who had sent many talented writers to jail."[50]

But even though the conservatives have lost influence in recent months, this does not necessarily mean the rout of their forces. Most of the periodicals are still in their hands, and *Oktiabr* devoted almost an entire issue (No. 11, 1962) to a counterattack on the liberals.

Khrushchev's stance in this tug of war remains an enigma. On November 23, in a speech to the Central Committee, he seemed to stand for the first time at the liberals' side, at least in his attitude towards de-Stalinization in literature. He stated that he, personally, had ordered the Yevtushenko poem on Stalin to be printed in *Pravda.* He also said that many important party workers had read Solzhenitsyn's manuscript and had not wanted to publish it, but that he had insisted that such facts could no longer be concealed. This speech might be regarded as almost a complete victory for the liberals —but for two circumstances. First, the speech has not been published in the USSR (at least up to the middle of December), and we have learned about it only from reports which have trickled out in the foreign press. Second, after Khrushchev and other party leaders visited two artistic exhibitions in Moscow at the end of November, they declared a ruthless war not only on abstract art but on everything that departs from naturalistic-socialist realist tranditions. In contrast to the non-publication of Khrushchev's November 23 speech, these remarks about the party leaders' "irreconcilability towards any deviation from the main line in the development of our art" were swiftly broadcast in the Soviet press.

A few days later, the extreme conservative, V. Serov, replaced the more moderate B. Iogansson as President of the Academy of Arts. The implication of this move for literature was reflected in a *Pravda* editorial summing up Khrushchev's remarks and mentioning "serious omissions in the work of the creative organizations" (an obvious reference to the Writers' Union).[51]

IT IS TOO EARLY, therefore, to speak of a conclusive liberal victory, and too early to sum up the literary cold war. One constant has revealed itself: the party's adoption of the "blowing hot and cold" tactic. It is entirely possible that a new ice age is now beginning as the successor to the "time of great hopes."

There is no question that those Soviet writers who defend the interests and the rights of the individual to freedom and happiness have made significant progress in the last ten years in spite of all the zig-zags. How far will this progress go? Is it reversible? The liberal writers are convincing themselves and others that it is irreversible. This is natural—if they were not optimists, they would not have taken any steps forward. But it is difficult to imagine that the party apparatus will surrender without resistance its claimed right to define what constitutes "freedom and happiness of the individual."

Since 1952 the liberals have come a long way. But the party program—the highest law of the party, which their work so obviously contradicts—has not changed one iota since that time. They are constantly reminded of their present semi-legal position and their failure as yet to cross any fundamental border. If the boundaries of freedom are to be broadened, then someday it will have to be realized that it is impossible and absurd for Soviet literature to coexist with Stalinist slogans. And then will come the decisive battle in the literary "cold war."

---

[47] I. Filippov, A. Turkov, "To Argue, Yet Believe," KP, October 19, 1952.

[48] KP, October 16, 1962.

[49] A. Dovzhenko, "From a Writer's Diary," LG, November 10, 1962.

[50] "Un écrivain exclu de l'Union des écrivains pour avoir servi de délateur volontaire," *Le Monde,* Nov. 29, 1962.

[51] "Art Belongs to the People," *Pravda,* Dec. 3, 1962. For English translation, see *Current Digest of the Soviet Press,* New York, December 26, 1962, p. 21.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Vagaries of Soviet Literature

Political Control of Literature in the USSR, 1946-1959,
by Harold Swayze.
Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1962.

Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets,
by Maurice Friedberg.
New York and London,
Columbia University Press, 1962.

Dissonant Voices in Soviet Literature,
edited by Patricia Blake and Max Hayward.
New York, Pantheon Books, 1962.

Reviewed by Kathryn B. Feuer

IN THE YEARS after 1917, when Russian industry, agriculture, and trade were being "socialized"—in the sense of being brought under total state control—one means of production, that ultimately private property, the creative faculty of the human mind, remained recalcitrant to direct expropriation. The massive Soviet effort to take over the nation's literary productive facilities from their anarchic, autonomous proprietors is a common concern of these three very different books: an anthology of some of the best Soviet writing from 1918 to 1961, edited and annotated by Patricia Blake and Max Hayward; a study of the treatment of prerevolutionary Russian literature in the Soviet period, by Maurice Friedberg; and an examination of Soviet literary policies since World War II, by Harold Swayze.

Of the three, the one by Swayze is—in some ways—perhaps the most unusual. The subject being "literary controls," it is puzzling, for example, not to find in the book any discussion of the actual mechanics of censorship, of the control system as exercised by *Glavlit* (Chief Administration for Literary Affairs and Publishing) and by the editorial boards of publishing houses and magazines. The sanctions and penalties to which authors are subject are inadequately discussed; there is no mention of the laws affecting writers and their work, though these do offer many of the "revealing insights into the nation's aims and aspirations" which Swayze seeks to uncover. The chapter "Bureaucratic Controls and Literary Production" is nevertheless a high point of the book, for its detailed and absorbing discussion of the workings of the Union of Soviet Writers and of the *Litfund* is, in the best sense, high-grade literary gossip, knowledgeable, sophisticated, and indispensible background which is not easily come by.

Indeed, Swayze's evocation of the *"literaturnyi byt,"* that particular professional matrix in which Soviet art is created, is the great contribution of this whole book, whose detailed account and analysis of literary decrees, controversies and *causes célèbres* in the postwar period make it an invaluable reference work for students of Soviet society. The author's analysis of the *Young Guard* episode of 1947,[1] for example, is one of a number of illuminating passages, and his conclusion about

Mrs. Feuer teaches Russian literature at the University of California (Berkeley). This is her first contribution to this journal.

[1] *The Young Guard,* by Alexander Fadeyev (1901-56) first appeared in 1945, and instantly became one of the most poular postwar Soviet novels. For two years the book, which dealt with partisan struggles against the Nazis, was praised by party critics as a splendid example of "socialist realism." In 1947, however, it was discovered that Fadeyev was guilty of a number of grievous errors, chief among them a failure to give sufficient credit to the role of the party in the activities of the partisans. Taking heed of the criticism, Fadeyev published in 1951 a revised version of *The Young Guard,* purged of its original deviations.—*Ed.*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the nature of the revisions Fadeyev was forced to make penetrates beyond the incident itself:

> **But party critics, accusing Fadeyev of distorting reality and history "in the crudest fashion," had concerned themselves largely with the area in which Fadeyev had been "bound by documents" rather than that in which he had been artistically "free." This is some indication of the nature of "reality" in postwar Soviet literature. (p. 46)**

Swayze's first chapter, "The Theoretical Foundations of Literary Controls," is also conceived in a limited and special way, but here the results seem less satisfactory. Treating Marxist "aesthetics" as fundamental, and Plekhanov's and Lenin's formulas as the rationale of Soviet literary policies, Swayze manifests a wondrous faith in the USSR as the philosopher's kingdom where actual events, literary or political, are but appearances hardly worthy of mention. Thus: "the apotheosis of 'Leninist aesthetics' in the 1930's marked a more emphatic effort to resolve the tensions apparent in Plekhanov's thinking on art and belles-lettres" (p. 8). But surely neither the tensions in Plekhanov's thinking, nor any theoretical tensions whatsoever created this change, but rather practical political considerations, chiefly Stalin's consolidation of power. And the significance of the emphasis on *partiinost* ("party-mindedness") in the new artistic doctrine is not so much that (or whether) this is what Lenin demanded of all literature in his 1905 article on the party press, but that the term provided a legitimizing cloak for Stalin's one-man rule (just as Lenin had turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into a Marxist guise for party rule).

In like manner, Swayze's treatment of the control system as a thing-in-itself, as a model political institution with its own laws, independent of the particular literature it is shaping and of the concrete power by which it is shaped, tends to restrict the significance of much of his research. Thus he formulates a thoughtful and precise "inner dialectic" for the system of literary controls: The party insists on crude indoctrination of its policies; the resulting restrictions produce discontented writers and works so poor they cannot be read; the party's propagandistic purpose itself then requires the granting of some artistic latitude; this more lenient application of controls has limited beneficial effect, but is halted or reversed when it threatens to touch on essential doctrines or powers.

So far so good. But, on the brink of an important conclusion about the Soviet political system, about how the party's position is threatened by excessive liberalism, Swayze pauses—and turns back to literary controls:

> **Yet each time this [moderate relaxation of controls] occurred during the postwar period, there arose threats to some fundamental tenet of *literary doctrine* or to an essential element of the *control system*, and as a consequence limits to the liberalization were established (p. 259, italics added).**

"Historians," Tolstoy wrote, "are like deaf men, answering questions no one has asked." What would he have had to say about political scientists?

About three quarters of *Political Controls* is devoted to a detailed chronicle of the workings of the system from the end of World War II through 1959. Swayze's periodization of the years up to 1957 is extremely valuable and will doubtless remain authoritative, as will his interpretation of their major events. His description of 1957-59 as characterized by a successful party "drive for consolidation" of its authority over literature, however, is more controversial—particularly the view that "by the time of the Third Congress of Soviet Writers in May 1959 the foundations of the Khrushchev settlement in literary affairs had been firmly laid" (p. 187), a settlement which the author calls superficially more tolerant than Stalin's policies, but which, he says, "from the point of view of the rebels of 1956 . . . could mean only one thing: capitulation" (pp. 206-08).

A MORE OPTIMISTIC interpretation of the aftermath of the Third Congress as a period in which Soviet writers won a limited but still meaningful degree of freedom is offered by Max Hayward in his introduction to *Dissonant Voices*. Fundamentally, Hayward and Swayze diverge in their readings of Khrushchev's speech at this gathering. Hayward calls it "good-humored and conciliatory"; he sees Khrushchev as the advocate of "more tolerance for writers who had 'erred'" and as having "disarmed the neo-Stalinists" by not giving them decisive support. He concludes:

> **Despite the usual ritualistic mention of the dangers of "revisionism" and the cardinal importance of *partiinost*, the effect of this speech was remarkably beneficial, and developments since the Third Congress have on the whole been encouraging (p. xxxiv).**

Swayze's analysis is more detailed and more convincing; he shows that the "tact and tolerance" which Khrushchev advocated "were to be reserved for those who had surrendered . . ." and notes that Khrushchev "emphasized another important strand of his argument with a quotation from Gorky: 'If the enemy does not surrender, he must be destroyed'." Khrushchev had declared also that it was for the party (not, presumably,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for writers) to "reveal and lay bare shortcomings and vices" and that "the party had deprived writers not only of the right to write badly. . . 'but above all of the right to write wrongly' " (pp. 207-208).

Nevertheless Hayward's assessment of the implications of the Third Congress seems more just than Swayze's and, above all, more usefully predictive. Indeed, he and his co-editor, Patricia Blake, present almost 100 pages of work published in the Soviet Union in "the improved atmosphere of the last three years," writings which are not politically revolutionary, yet are ideologically unorthodox to a degree which suggests that the spirit of 1956 has not capitulated but has rather persisted and even grown stronger.

What is perhaps especially significant in the *Dissonant Voices* selections is, as Hayward puts it, their "unorthodoxy, in formal rather than political terms, by the traditional standards of socialist realism." Their very existence seems to demonstrate that many writers viewed Khrushchev's reiteration of Zhdanovist formulas as (in Hayward's phrase) a "ritualistic" act rather than as a meaningful threat. Finally (though perhaps neither author would agree with this writer that it exists), a curious new phenomenon in Soviet literature seems more comprehensible in Hayward's terms. This is the blurring of the line between legally-published and clandestine works in the USSR. The line exists and will doubtless never be effaced, as is made clear by some writings of Tertz or of Nikolai Arzhak, whose "This is Moscow Speaking" is included in *Dissonant Voices* (an extraordinarily good story, somehow recalling Victor Serge's neglected novel, *The Case of Comrade Tulayev*). I wonder, however, how many of us could score 100 percent in a blindfold test on some recent works, with accurate ascription of this one to *Novyi mir* and that to *Kultura* (the Polish magazine, published in Paris. where Tertz's and Arzhak's works have appeared).

IT IS IRONIC that the Communist Party itself has helped to create the conditions which make literature so potentially dangerous to it, by insistently stressing the elements of social and political protest in the classics of 19th-century Russian literature. Readers thus trained to consider misery, despair, and rebellion as the only "realism" in literature, expert at spotting even non-existent exposures of tyranny, injustice and oppression, might retain these categories when they take up Soviet books. Soviet interpretations of the Russian literary tradition are one of the many subjects explored in Friedberg's highly rewarding study, which is also a bibliographical handbook to publication of the classics in the USSR and an account of ideological trends in Soviet criticism, which will be of great value to students of prerevolutionary culture.

In a relatively short space Friedberg presents an extraordinary amount of information. The author's rich knowledge of prerevolutionary literature, his sensitivity to each nuance in its treatment, his insistence on always examining this treatment in the light of the political demands and pressures to which Soviet literary criticism is a response, all combine to render Russian literature a whole and completed world whose fate can be experimentally studied, as well as a multi-faceted prism through which the aims and values of the Soviet system are reflected.

This is not a book easily read through from beginning to end; on the other hand, one can open it at random and be rewarded on every page. Somehow its abundantly valuable material has been confusingly organized into a series of chapters which constantly overlap one another, not in their data (the book is not repetitive), but in their essential subject matter. Each chapter or topic within a chapter is developed chronologically, so that we travel the weary road from 1917 onward again and again; in addition, subheads in the index are listed in an irritatingly arbitrary fashion.

These are minor shortcomings, however, in the face of all the author's accomplishments. Especially informative is his detailed account of the critical careers of three representative authors: "The 'progressive' Nekrasov, the 'neutral' Lermontov' and the 'reactionary' Leskov." Lermontov's Alger-like rise, for example, from 13th place in Soviet publication of the classics just after the revolution to second place (past Pushkin and breathing down the neck of Tolstoy) by 1941 is a dramatic tale (or a Gogolian picaresque?) of the patriotic and political rehabilitation of the romantically self-centered aristocrat and artist. Even during World War II—to give just one example—when Lermontov's "nationalist" writings were appearing in hundreds of thousands of copies, these works were not printed in the editions for non-Russians. Moreover, Lermontov, who in 1939 had been the bard of "the strong free mountaineers of the Caucasus . . . waging a prolonged, bloody war for their independence, who did not want to submit to Russian autocracy," became, in the postwar era of socialist imperialism under the banner of "the lesser evil," a profoundly dialectical theoretician of Tsarist expansionism, who sympathized with the invading Russian soldiers and "understood Russia's expansion in the Caucasus as a logical and historically inevitable step, for . . . Russia represented . . . a higher level of economic, political,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and cultural development." (The quotations are taken by Friedberg from two books on Lermontov by the *same* critic.)

IT IS PERHAPS presumptuous to generalize about the huge mass of data presented in this study, and yet, in the treatment of the classics by Soviet critics, three chief stages do seem to emerge: the early period, when writers were praised or condemned for their political views and their works valued chiefly as social documentation (a flagrantly one-sided approach which could, nevertheless, in skilled hands, yield some interesting results and which in retrospect, in comparison with what followed, looks very good indeed); what might be called the "one-great-nation approach" of the mid-1930's, which stressed any sign of the writer's love for Russia to include him in the patriotic fold (an approach resulting in twistings of the truth, yet beginning from *some* truth); and finally, the postwar ratification approach which systematically avoided any analysis, Marxist or otherwise, and wherever necessary simply falsified the facts of the writer's life or art to present him as a supporter of current party policies.

Friedberg does not treat the post-Stalin years; the last of the critical works which he examines appeared in 1953. He suggests that "a careful study of Soviet literary criticism, including the evaluations of the classics, would permit one to discern nuances of political discussion that are not likely to appear in the daily press" (p. 86). Such a study could be valuable indeed. I have on my desk right now three recent Soviet works on prerevolutionary literature, and their diversity is suggestive. The first is *Pushkin and France* (1960), by the late Boris Tomashevsky, a partially revised collection of the great scholar's articles on the subject which appeared in 1915-39 and 1954-59, plus a significantly revised "Pushkin and Nationalism" published originally in 1941. Despite the fact that it has been published in what is for Soviet books on Pushkin a tiny edition of 5,000, the appearance of this scholarly, impartial work is nonetheless significant. And in at least one respect it is dazzling and unique: while citations from Stalin are now in *mauvais ton* in Soviet scholarly publications, Lenin is still a welcome authority, and Belinsky, Cherynshevsky, or Dobroliubov are inevitably quoted. *Pushkin and France* mentions none of them except Belinsky, whose numerous writings on Pushkin are referred to exactly twice and in passing; on one of these occasions Belinsky's inaccuracy is pointed out.

An edition of the *Tales and Stories* of V. F. Odoevsky (1959) is another affair; its *appearance* is also significant, since Odoevsky was an idealist, a mystic and a Slavophile whose works have barely been published in the Soviet Union since 1929 except—cautiously—in 1950 as a native substitute to Western influences on Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol. The prefatory article, however, utterly falsifies Odoevsky's views by a familiar twist: right-wing criticism of capitalism and utilitarianism becomes left-wing criticism in which "the reader recognizes . . . the United States of America"; this rehabilitation of Odoevsky as a political thinker reaches farcical proportions when the critic finds it "extraordinarily interesting" that in a utopian fantasy "Odoevsky foresaw [alas! in the 44th century, but still—] Russia and China as the centers of world culture."

Victor Shklovsky's *Imaginative Prose: Reflections and Analyses* (1959) is perhaps most interesting of all. Shklovsky shows Plekhanov to have been wrong, *but*—wrong in a dispute with Dostoevsky; he cites the authority of Nekrasov, *but*—for the merits of Tiutchev; he declares that Soviet readers cannot possibly identify with Hemingway's "lost generation" and goes on to imply that they certainly do just that. He writes a preface renouncing his former errors and rebuking those "in the West" who find in them evidence of political disloyalty, and in this apologia he manages to list many titles now unknown to Soviet readers. Shklovsky's intent is not, however, to score small points; his book opens with a delicately handled and totally devastating critique of prescribed Soviet literary norms, couched as a discussion of Belinsky's phrase, widely accepted, "thinking in images." In a complex skein of reasoning, too fragile for summary, Shklovsky dismembers the entire body of current Soviet literary policy, and he accomplishes this without a single reference to a contemporary writer. For the Western reader Shklovsky's book has many surprises; for the Soviet reader its fireworks must be dazzling indeed.

IN HIS LAST chapter Friedberg discusses—too briefly—the possible political implications of the great popularity of the classics and the alternatives to official views they offer. He presents no conclusion, only many considerations, yet one senses a limited optimism about the "subversive effects" of this reading, tempered by the statement that "it would be imprudent to be dogmatic about 'practical' and immediate repercussions" (p. 174). But when we look for or hope for such "practical repercussions," do we not, with however high motives, to some extent take over the Soviet view of art as *agitprop?* (Hands off literature! What a slogan for the Moscow *rukiprochniki;* assemble before Glavlit at dawn, ink

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bottles at the ready.) Neither so much nor so little should be expected of the Russian classical heritage with its vision of life which, whether expressed in the ironies of a Pushkin or the thunderbolts of a Tolstoy, served *no* party, but was always moral and humane and truth-seeking.

The Soviet consciousness has been significantly affected by forty-five years of indoctrination, yet every visitor to the USSR returns with the good news of individuals possessed of kindness, spirituality, and a longing for freedom. And however authoritarian its purpose or murderous the implementation, the party must always maintain that its policies have generous and humanitarian ends. These sickening hypocrisies have the positive value of setting ultimate limits, and they also provide a possible "tradition" within which an evolution toward less aggressive policies and less oppressive and brutal institutions could take place. For these saving hypocrisies we can thank the Russian classical heritage, and we would do well to let the Soviets know of our admiration for it; the *lumpen stiliagi* with ducktail haircuts are not our best friends or representatives.

Friedberg's book closes with Zamiatin's gloomy prophecy: "I am afraid that Russian literature has but one future—her past." In *Dissonant Voices,* Blake and Hayward have assembled an impressive body of evidence to the contrary. Besides Hayward's introductory essay, which—with the reservation noted above—is a fine short history of Soviet literature, the book contains twenty stories and tales, poems and essays, of exceptional interest. Two items which have become newspaper staples (though not necessarily the worse for that) are included —Yevtushenko's "Babi Yar" and an excerpt from Ehrenburg's memoirs. There are three interesting "Chekhovian" thaw tales (both Swayze and Hayward comment on Chekhov's marked influence on young writers) and two rather moving poems, worth reading even in translation (which is often not the case). These, plus Arzhak's extraordinary tale (which partakes of the fantastic realism of much of the clandestine literature), a trifling satire, and Lev Kassil's "Tale of the Three Master Craftsmen" represent the postwar period. Kassil's 1948 attack on Stalin, veiled as a children's fairy tale, will be a revelation to those who grit their teeth in expectation of whimsy-cum-Aesopian language; it is nothing of the sort, but rather a powerful, beautifully told, and affecting story.

The 1930's are not represented here, and from the war period there is only an excerpt from Zoshchenko's *Before Sunrise.* From the 1920's the culling is pure gold; truly brilliant literary essays by Zamiatin and Shklovsky, equally brilliant, perfectly realized stories by Grin and Babel (with the bonus of some recent Babel reminiscences by Paustovsky), Yesenin's poem of heroic despair, "Soviet Russia," and Pasternak's poem of rueful hope about the poetess Marina Tsvetaeva—which must, however, somehow pale before the editors' introductory account of Tsvetaeva's fate:

> **The family returned to Russia [from emigration] in 1939. Her husband was arrested and perished in prison; her daughter was also arrested, her son died at the front. Tsvetaeva herself was exiled to a small town where she could not find work, even as a cleaning woman. There, she hanged herself in 1941. (p. 71)**

In addition, there is a valuable translation of a good part of Pilniak's *Mahogany,* extremely interesting in its own right, besides its significance for *The Volga Flows into the Caspian Sea,* and finally, the opening piece in the book, a Pasternak fragment, "Without Love," recently discovered by Professor George Katkov in a Socialist Revolutionary newspaper from 1918, an eight-page "first draft" of *Dr. Zhivago* in which one finds something of a unifying creative vision for the years between.

What can one add to such a table of contents, except that many of these works are almost unobtainable elsewhere, in any language, and that the translations are very good? The gratitude we feel to the editors they rightly direct to the rare and gifted authors:

> **One day it will perhaps be shown that not only Russia, but the whole world, is indebted to Soviet literature for keeping alive, in unimaginable conditions, that indefinable sense of freedom which is common to all men.**

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES and VIEWS

"Consumerism" in Hungary

THE POWERFUL ERUPTION of popular discontent in October 1956 taught a lesson to the Communist rulers of Hungary. Once the uprising was quelled through Soviet intervention, and the one-party dictatorship firmly re-established, the Kadar regime embarked on an economic policy both more rational and more flexible that that of its Stalinist predecessors. The chief economic aim of the Rakosi regime had been to increase the quantity of production, regardless of the costs involved and the requirements of the market. Since 1956, thanks to a political situation that forced greater economic awareness on the Communist leaders, the stress has shifted toward the quality of production and the needs of the consumer. The essence of this change is expressed in a statement made by one of Kadar's experts in 1959:

At present our economic policy has the important task of complying with the demands of the domestic market and of foreign trade to the greatest possible extent; production should conform to changing requirements; factories should product goods that the customer demands, in such a quality and variety as he demands.[1]

Kadar's "liberal" economic policy has been implemented through a substantial loan from other Communist countries and has gained momentum through such measures as the increasing participation of non-party experts in the direction of economic life. Cautious planning and rational investment have had good results: both national and individual income grew rapidly until 1960, slowing down only in the last two years. The standard of living expressed in real wages has risen considerably: according to official statistics, since 1956 real income has grown by as much as 34 percent.[2] The demand for durable consumer goods has increased accordingly. Such items as cars, television sets and refrigerators—practically non-existent before the revolution—have now become accessible to at least some limited few in the population.

The so-called "Guiding Directives" issued to the Eighth Congress of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party), held in November 1962, claim that the Five-Year Plan for 1960-65 is going to give the population 215,000 vacuum cleaners, 128,000 refrigerators, 610,000 television sets and 600,000 washing machines.[3] It is assumed that by 1965 every third household will have a television set, while about 40 percent of the households will have their own washing machines. Cars, which are powerful status symbols in Hungary, are going to stay status symbols for some time to come. Before 1956 there were about 20,000 cars in the country,[4] and from 1957 to 1959 some 17,000 more were imported (there is no local production in passenger cars). The target figure of the Five-Year Plan is 43,000. Thus, even if the plan is completely realized, there will be no more than 80,000 automobiles in Hungary against a population numbering over ten million. Since in any case more than half of the cars are imported for and owned by the state, it is clear that the average wage-earner will have to wait a long time before he can buy a car, however modest, for himself.

WHETHER OR NOT the promises of the Five-Year Plan materialize, the figures quoted above indicate that there is a *trend towards consumerism* in Hungary. How strong is this trend, how deep does it go, who benefits from it, what are its psychological and social consequences? Questions like these are raised quite often in the Hungarian press, and in October 1961 the literary monthly *Uj Irás* started a discussion aimed explicitly at answering all questions concerning "consumerism," or as some Hungarian writers have nicknamed it "frigidaire-socialism."

In the course of this discussion various interesting viewpoints have emerged, with the opponents of consumerism in the minority. Some of the opposition arguments have reflected Stalinist prejudices, asserting in the usual jar-

[1] *Társadalmi Szemle* (Budapest), October 1959, p. 2.
[2] *Népszabadság* (Budapest), November 21, 1962, p. 7.
[3] *Társadalmi Szemle,* August-September, 1962.
[4] *The Review* (Brussels), July 1960, p. 48.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gon that "Western" gadgets have a demoralizing effect on their owners, that private ownership fosters a "bourgeois" mentality, and the like. But fear of consumerism has also been expressed by socialists of an idealistic bent, who are less concerned with the decline of ideological fervor among former revolutionaries, the de-radicalization of society, than with such psychological aspects of the acquiring process as technical fetishism, superficial individualism, and indifference toward social problems. These "idealists" regard consumerism with mixed feelings. On one hand, they agree with the postulate that there can be no socialism without high living standards, but on the other hand, they are not convinced that the regime's present economic policy will make the individual Hungarian conscious of his rights and responsibilities in a socialist society. One exponent of this view is the young writer Imre Takács, who argues that although Hungary has a socialist economy, socialist morality (simply defined as devotion to the common good) is far from being accepted by the masses as their supreme guiding principle. Avowing that unprincipled consumerism—catching up by any means with those who already have a car—is common in Hungary, Takács holds that the economic policy applied since 1956 has been shaping "a mental attitude out of harmony with our social system." [5]

At present, acquisitiveness is certainly the strongest popular mood in Hungary. It is usually combined with indifference and even with hostility towards politics. Nobody wants "to get involved," or (this is true for many disillusioned Communists) "to be taken in" once again. Even the young are disillusioned: though their elders may have wanted "to save the world," all they want is a good job or a successful career. In this situation private initiative is complementary to social inertia.

Some critics, while admitting that this inertia exists, put the blame on the "mistakes and excesses" of the Rákosi regime, or else try to explain it away in terms of the transitional character of the present period:

. . . in general a popular mood lacking in any ideals is about to take shape. Petty-bourgeois attitudes, philistinism, bleakness, we are asked, is this socialism? I think we can give no answer but—yes. Yes, this *too* is socialism. How can we expect from the people of a transitional period the moral and spiritual norms of communism? [6]

THE CASE IN DEFENSE of consumerism, as it has emerged in the *Uj Irás* discussion, maintains that there is no reason for anxiety: technological development and material improvements are not antagonistic to the cause of socialism—on the contrary, no socialist society can do without them. This, essentially, is the view of Khrushchev—and with him the Hungarian party leaders, with some possible exceptions. As an economic spokesman of the Hungarian party has put it: "Socialist construction is successful when it goes together with a regular and permanent rise in the living standards of the population." [7] Most participants of the *Uj Irás* discussion have accepted this truism, some of them elaborating it even further. As one journalist remarked, if the fears that affluence and property-owning undermine socialist morals were brought to their ultimate conclusion, the ideologically most conscious and most revolutionary people anywhere would be the bushmen of central Africa, as "they do not own anything except a loincloth and a blowpipe." [8] The same journalist comments favorably on the wave of acquisitiveness that has beset Hungary in recent years. He can see nothing wrong in consumerism because it is the formerly poor who now live better, consume more, and acquire television sets. This interpretation makes consumerism respectable, almost transforming it into a socialist virtue.

THE RECENT discussion has produced still a third view, with more point to it than the arguments of either the "idealist" critics or the "realistic" defenders of consumerism. This view suggest that improvements in living standards have not been far-reaching enough to concern the population at large, since the wages of the average worker are still barely sufficient to cover his everyday expenses. *Uj Irás* printed the letter of such a worker, underscoring the fact that Hungary is still no consumer's paradise. "A car, a weekend-cottage?"—says the letter—"those are but dreams." [9]

The most outspoken contribution in this vein was a recent commentary by a practically unknown young writer, called Asperján. He evaluates consumerism positively but not without certain qualifications. Echoing the letter-writer, he remarks that only very few workers could be "demoralized" by bourgeois comforts, since most workingmen cannot afford to buy "gadgets" with their present wages. Who, then, reaps the benefits of affluence? Some small artisans, some doctors, scientists and intellectuals, and last but not least—the functionaries. According to Asperján, most of these functionaries who have risen to high position from humble origins have made their career through the party, yet once they achieve success, they forget about service to the people and to socialism. It is not the car that corrupts them, but rather their anxiety to keep the car and with it the job: "It is painful to see that some of these promoted cadres will do anything in order to preserve the material wealth they have already acquired." [10] Such an outlook, says Asperján, is the first step towards a "petty-bourgeois" mentality. He further resents the fact that some career-minded people infiltrate the Communist Party with the sole aim of building their "private" socialism behind the protective shield of party membership.

---

[5] *Uj Irás*, (Budapest), February 1962, p. 155.
[6] *Kortárs*, (Budapest), August 1962, p. 1251.
[7] *Társadalmi Szemle*, October 1959, p. 9.
[8] *Uj Irás*, January 1962, p. 52.
[9] *Ibid.* November 1961, p. 842.
[10] *Ibid.*, June 1962, p. 628.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN LIGHT OF ITS limited scope, consumerism must be called a trend rather than a reality in present-day Hungary. The relative affluence achieved since 1956 is likely to continue but not to increase rapidly. At present, it does not affect the whole of society: despite the initial rise in real income, the majority of workers are still caught in a bind between low wages and high production norms, and there has been no substantial improvement in the lot of the collectivized peasantry for the last three years. On the other hand, living standards have continued to improve for the technical intelligentsia, and for all state and party functionaries, as well as for certain small artisans and professional groups. Although the latter elements have benefited, the regime's economic policy basically reflects the *consumerism of the new class,* comprising the upper layers of Communist society. It remains to be seen whether the further development of this trend will be directed toward the increase of new class privileges or toward the wider distribution of material wealth among the masses.

George Gomori

(A Hungarian journalist and writer who fled his native country in 1956, Mr. Gomori is now on the staff of St. Antony's College, Oxford University.)

Khrushchev on Stalin

FEW THINGS ARE MORE hazardous than predictions of Soviet policy moves, but it appears likely that still another chapter in Stalinology may yet be forthcoming.

Between 1956 and 1961, despite occasional mild qualification, Khrushchev succeeded in transforming the image of Stalin into that of the great villain in the development of Soviet communism. In retrospect, it seems that he was driven to adopt this course largely because of his own involvement in the struggle for supremacy.[1] In "exposing" Stalin, however, Khrushchev has not really eliminated falsehoods but has added to them. More importantly, he appears to have carried the assault on Stalinism beyond the limits of compatibility with long-term Soviet interests.

For Khrushchev, anti-Stalinism—the break with the past—has served since 1956 primarily as a platform around which he could rally considerable forces within the party and throughout Soviet society against his rivals for power, the "men of the old order." To castigate Stalinism was to promise, by implication, a change of methods. But also, by disclosing the "crimes of the Stalin era" and presenting the dead dictator in a most unfavorable light, Khrushchev was making certain that those of his rivals whose association with Stalin, both personal and ideological, was closer than his own would have no room for maneuver. In all this he was following the reverse of Stalin's tactics of 1924. Whereas Stalin, after Lenin's death, had created a cult of Leninism and made himself its archpriest, Khrushchev was destroying any possibility of Stalinism's survival as a heritage, and he himself assumed the principal role in this destruction.

It was Khrushchev's immediate purpose of enhancing his prospects in the struggle for power, however, that led him to give his denunciation of Stalin an extreme form which is really untenable. While his own primary objective—the isolation and defeat of his domestic rivals—has been amply fulfilled, the long-range validity of his position is in doubt. His leadership of the international Communist movement has weakened over the years, and the Stalin question has been far from resolved.

TO BEGIN WITH 1956, the picture Khrushchev drew of Stalin for the benefit of the delegates to the 20th CPSU Congress was a strange one. Stalin's career was divided into two basic periods: the first from prerevolutionary days down to approximately 1935; the second from 1935 to 1953. During the earlier period Stalin was apparently a party stalwart who fought for the revolution and against the Whites; for Leninism and against the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, and all manner of deviationists; for the industrialization of the USSR and against the kulaks. Admittedly, even in this period, Stalin occasionally showed

[1] *E.g.,* See A. Avtorkhanov, *Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party,* New York, Praeger, 1959, p. 338 for a comparison of Stalin's purges of the 1920's and Khrushchev's in 1956-57. Even Stalin was more "democratic" than Mr. Khrushchev, according to the author, since he allowed publication of opposition speeches in the proceedings of the 14th Congress. What Molotov or Malenkov said in 1956 or later was never made known.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

signs of megalomania and callous disregard of others, as for instance during Lenin's illness. It was not, however, until the assassination of Kirov and the purges of the middle 1930's that Stalin became the pernicious, bloody autocrat of all his later days. From here on, the Khrushchev balance sheet on Stalin became entirely one-sided: it did not credit the late dictator personally with a single positive act or achievement during a period of approximately eighteen years![2] Such "balance" as was struck in the 20th Congress speech was thus drawn along chronological lines: Stalin's positive aspects from the standpoint of the Communist movement belonged to his early years before 1935; after that his role was wholly negative.

In order to make sure that Stalinism would be utterly and thoroughly discredited, Khrushchev described Stalin's role in World War II and the postwar period in a grotesque and contradictory way. The picture of the old dictator-at-war which emerged from the "secret" report was one of a bumbling, fitful, yet cruel incompetent who, insofar as he acted at all, was a heavy burden to his colleagues and subordinates. This image of Stalin, conveniently omitting any reference to his wartime dealings with Churchill and Roosevelt, was also projected into the postwar period. Khrushchev now stressed Stalin's growing paranoia and increasing monopolization of decision-making power, which he said had made a mockery of the Central Committee and the Politburo.

With respect to the war years particularly, Khrushchev is contradicted by a considerable body of evidence.[3] A number of prominent Westerners representing a wide spectrum of backgrounds, who dealt with Stalin during this period, have offered a very different view of him. While no man could of course have been as great, wise, and good as Stalin was depicted by his own propaganda, he was, by most contemporary non-Soviet accounts, a very formidable figure. In two particulars—competence in political and military affairs, especially of his own country, and ability in negotiations—Stalin was rated as highly as any statesman of his time by such men as Winston Churchill, Harry Hopkins, Anthony Eden, and Cordell Hull.[4] Even Hitler and his subordinates were properly "respectful" and impressed.[5]

IN GENERAL, these authoritative observations and impressions tend to support the picture of Stalin drawn by Isaac Deutscher in his 1949 biography of the Russian dictator rather than that drawn by Khrushchev in 1956 and thereafter.[6] Stalin was cruel and did make mistakes, but he was *not* the consistently blundering incompetent depicted by Khrushchev. Moreover, Stalin's "good points" are of no less relevance for communism and for Soviet Russia, after all, than his bad ones. Most foreigners who met the Soviet dictator during the 1930's and 1940's did not of course share his values or outlook. The appreciation of Stalin's qualities—his cunning, his strength, and his ability—shown by a Churchill, Hopkins or Hitler is comparable to an objective appreciation of the perceptiveness of Machiavelli or to Alan Bullock's detached recognition of Hitler's extraordinary demagogic abilities. Such "recognition" may be accompanied by a genuine moral revulsion which, on the contrary, would have no place in the view of those for whom Stalin's ends justified the means.

Be that as it may, Khrushchev's position on Stalin hardly seems tenable in the long run, and somehow, sometime, the Soviets will have to extricate themselves from it. If Stalin was really incompetent and criminal for at least eighteen years and yet was all-powerful, then the achievements of the Soviet Union during that period must be considered accidental. If, alternatively, Stalin was a criminal blunderer but was not all-powerful, then Khrushchev and his colleagues must obviously share both the credit and the blame for the acts of his rule. Finally, if the Soviet Union, according to Khrushchev, did so well on balance

[2] The most recent official Soviet histories have scarcely been more charitable in their treatment of Stalin. For example, the *Outline History of the USSR* (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960) does not go beyond the defeat of dissidents within the Communist Party in listing the achievements of Stalin. All references in the text dealing with the late 1930's and onwards, merely mention Stalin's participation in certain activities, as for example his membership in the party's Central Committee during World War II, where Stalin's name is listed following seven others beginning with that of A. A. Andreyev. Characteristically, the book devotes 28 out of 378 pages of its text to the years 1938-1953! The official *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (Moscow, 1960) relates only one incident in which Stalin was the chief decision-maker during these years. It reproves him for "uncalled-for measures" in the area of agricultural policy in 1945 (p. 625).

[3] Not the least of which is the *History of the CPSU, op. cit.*, pp. 563-64. Its account of the events of early November 1941, with Stalin addressing the troops a few miles from the front line, hardly squares with the Khrushchev line.

[4] See Winston Churchill, *The Second World War,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950, Vol. 4, p. 482; Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins,* New York, Harper and Brothers, 1948, p. 344; *The Memoirs of Anthony Eden: Full Circle,* Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960, p. 55; *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull,* New York, The Macmillan Company, 1948, Vol. 2, p. 1311; Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs,* New York, Doubleday and Company, 1955, Vol. I, p. 364. On Stalin's talent as a negotiator, even Trotsky had some positive things to say: See his *Stalin,* London, Hollis and Carter, 1947, pp. 213, 243, 270.

[5] *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944,* transl. by N. Cameron and R. M. Stevens, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1953. Declared the Fuehrer, Stalin "must command our unconditional respect. In his own way he is a hell of a fellow!" (p. 587) *Cf. The Goebbels Diaries,* edited by L. P. Lochner, New York, Doubleday & Co., 1948, p. 468, and *The Ribbentrop Memoirs,* London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1954, p. 113.

[6] *Stalin,* New York, Vintage Books, 1960, particularly pp. 566-70.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Stalin was its absolute ruler, then the "good" in the latter must have outweighed the "bad"—even during the last two decades of his rule.

FACED BY these alternatives, why did Khrushchev choose the course he did? Why did he attack Stalin at all instead of identifying with him as Stalin had once identified with Lenin? And why did he go so far in his attack? [7]

The period of Khrushchev's rise to undisputed power from 1953 to 1961 is divided by the great landmark of the 20th CPSU Congress. From Stalin's death in March 1953 until 1956, Khrushchev was still surrounded by old-time Stalinists within the party Presidium and outwardly was himself a Stalinist. During these years he carefully prepared the groundwork at the lower party levels, just as Stalin had done in the 1920's, for an ultimate showdown with his rivals in the succession struggle.

By early 1956 Khrushchev was ready to strike openly at his opponents. What he needed at this juncture was some broad, quasi-ideological formula which would enable him to demand and justify the eventual ouster from influential positions of men like Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich and all their actual as well as potential allies. Anti-Stalinism provided him with this formula.

Whatever its "objective merits," Stalinism had bred fear in the Communist Party and throughout Soviet society, fear of physical liquidation and repression. However "essential" Stalin's methods might have been for making Soviet Russia a great power, these methods were hardly popular. Adherence to Stalinism could confer legitimacy, but not popularity, on the regime of Stalin's successors.[8]

The political "thaw" which preceded Khrushchev's rise to one-man rule was an implicit recognition by most, if not all, of Stalin's heirs of the need for some relaxation.

In 1956 Khrushchev made an open and fundamental choice between legitimacy and popularity. He realized that he could hardly claim to be more Stalinist than Molotov, Malenkov, or Kaganovich. If faithful service to the old master was to be the key to power, Khrushchev's claim would always rank lower than theirs.[9] So he decided to switch the tables and thereby convert weakness into strength. His exposure of Stalin's crimes at the 20th Congress was an implicit pledge to the party of a new age of increased personal security, if not of greater freedom. And to the extent that Stalin had been an inept, deranged ruler, Khrushchev implied that those who had stood closest to the dead dictator must have been the most tainted by his corruption and his evil methods. They were Stalin's fellow liquidators and yes-men who could not be trusted.

If there had been no power struggle, Khrushchev would have had no need to "go overboard" in his attack on Stalin; he could have balanced the "good" against the "bad" more equitably or glossed over the unsavory aspects of the late dictator's reign. Above all, he could have prepared the ground ideologically so as to reorient not merely the CPSU but the whole Communist movement in the direction of his contemplated new line. Such a milder approach might have saved him from such obvious reproaches as: "Where were you when all this happened?" —or: "If Stalin was really that bad and that powerful, what kind of society have you been building for the past thirty years?"

AS IT WAS, the Communist parties of the world were badly shaken by Khrushchev's sudden and drastic move.[10] Some of them, above all the Chinese,[11] could not follow the CPSU lead even if they had been disposed to do so.

[7] The question of what impelled Khrushchev's 1956 denunciation of Stalin has been the subject of varying interpretations by Western observers. One point of view ascribed it not to his own volition and initiative but to pressure by Mikoyan. These speculations stemmed from the fact that it was Mikoyan who actually led off the attack on Stalin at the 20th Congress. From the perspective of six years later, however, it is clear that Mikoyan, far from dragging an unwilling Khrushchev by his ear, acted as his advance spokesman or, as Jane Degras has called it, an "audience-reaction" tester. The proof of this is to be sought not in a textual analysis of the speeches made at the 20th Congress, but in the outcome of the struggle for power. By 1962, Khrushchev has established his personal dominance in the party to a degree surpassed only by Stalin himself. All of the old members of Stalin's Politburo have been eliminated —except Mikoyan. If Mikoyan, who is not even an *apparatchik,* had crossed swords with Khrushchev in 1956, he would have surely followed the others into oblivion long ago. See George Paloczi-Horvath, *Khrushchev: The Making of a Dictator,* Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1960, pp. 194, 200. *Cf.* Jane Degras, "Anatomy of Tyranny: Khrushchev's Attack on Stalin" in A. Brumberg (ed.) *Russia Under Khrushchev: An Anthology from Problems of Communism,* New York, Praeger, 1962, p. 80.

[8] Here Khrushchev's repudiation of the Stalin doctrine of a sharpening class conflict as a feature of increasingly successful "socialist construction" was, no doubt, very helpful.

[9] In 1924, by contrast, Stalin could pose as Lenin's "truest" heir because Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev had in the past strayed from the narrow road of Leninist orthodoxy. Stalin's record, while less distinguished, was ostensibly free from such blemishes.

[10] See, *e.g.,* statement of the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party, in *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism,* New York, Columbia University Press, 1956, p. 169; also Togliatti, pp. 228-29, expressing very strong public dissatisfaction with the method of disclosure by Khrushchev. Cf. G. F. Hudson, R. Lowenthal and R. MacFarquhar, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute,* New York, Praeger, 1961, pp. 1-2, 225.

[11] How Mao's name had become closely linked with Stalin's in Chinese Communist official history is illustrated by Chen Po-ta (*Stalin and the Chinese Revolution,* Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1953) who described Mao as Stalin's "disciple and comrade-in-arms," one whose views "are based on the teachings of Stalin" (pp. 28 and 23). Chen quoted Mao as saying of Stalin: "We must hail him, we must support him, and we must learn from him" (pp. 1-2).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The abrupt transformation of a god, for thirty years the object of unprecedented adulation, into a criminal was simply too severe a shock. It was not an adroit maneuver by Khrushchev. But from 1956 through 1961, the conquest and consolidation of personal political power were far more important to him than proximate consequences. To take a halfway position on Stalin, particularly with respect to the latter part of his rule, would have been, for Khrushchev, to take a halfway position vis-à-vis Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, Bulganin and the whole "anti-party group." It would have meant either yielding or at best sharing power.

From the fall of 1956 onwards de-Stalinization began to take its toll in international Communist ranks, with the outbreaks in Poland and Hungary and the disaffection of China all adding up to a large debit for Khrushchev, clearly the chief architect of the policy. Furthermore, with respect to three key problems which had figured in his platform of attack on the Stalinists, Khrushchev obviously faltered. First, his initial efforts to woo Tito back into the Communist fold proved unavailing, and by the end of 1961 he was again calling the Yugoslav leader a "revisionist," thus conceding in effect that Stalin had been right in condemning Tito as a traitor to communism and that his (Khrushchev's) own tactics of trying to win Tito over by kindness instead of Stalin's rudeness were ineffectual.

Secondly, Khrushchev had staked a great deal on the question of agriculture, claiming that Stalin and his close associates had bungled the job. The failure in food production was one of the chief charges he had leveled against Malenkov and the whole Stalinist group, and he had repeatedly promised that his own "correct" policy would enable the USSR to "catch up with and surpass the USA" in various fields of agricultural production. However, on the eve of the 22nd Party Congress these grandiose promises still remained far from fulfillment, causing Khrushchev to demote the Minister of Agriculture as a scapegoat for the failure.

Thirdly, in the area of policy towards the West, Khrushchev was pledged to "peaceful coexistence" and "success through negotiation." He professed confidence in the efficacy of personal diplomacy, even to the point of eventually winning the good will of the American President as distinguished from the "imperialists" around him. His 1959 journey to the United States was greeted with something less than enthusiasm in Peking, and his "hopeful view of US imperialism" caused profound Chinese misgivings. In the light of the failure of his diplomacy to produce either disarmament or a settlement on Soviet terms, his belligerent antics in Paris after the U-2 incident probably evoked sarcastic comments among the "anti-party group" in Moscow and its sympathizers abroad.

THUS, IN THE FALL of 1961, Khrushchev found his political position threatened by failures in foreign policy and in Soviet agriculture and by growing disunity within the Communist camp. Neither Soviet successes in space nor the growth of Soviet influence in Cuba could compensate for these setbacks. Under these conditions, the struggle to maintain his personal power, far from being over, remained at the top of Khrushchev's agenda.

Before the convocation of the 22nd Congress, Khrushchev engineered the most rapid and massive turnover in the party organization since before World War II. Publicly, this action was justified on the ground that it was necessary to bring new blood into the party, but the haste with which it was carried out clearly suggested a lack of assurance on Khrushchev's part as to the reliability of the "old hands." The First Secretary reserved his final blow to the opposition forces for the party Congress. This course, in one respect, was reminiscent of Stalin's in the 1930's. There was no doubt that Khrushchev had a solid majority behind him in the Presidium and a sizable one in the Central Committee. But like Stalin after 1929, he obviously felt that potential foes in the context of a crisis could not safely be let alone.[12] Therefore, he used the forum of the 22nd Congress to strike once again at Stalinism, this time not even bothering to "balance the picture" at all. His indictment of the "anti-party group" spanned the border of outright criminality—he painted them as Stalin's executioners, murderers like him. And just as Stalin had refused to countenance a niche in the international Communist movement for supporters of Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev, so Khrushchev carried his assault on Stalinism into the international arena. He lashed out at the Albanians—and by inference the Chinese—attacking them first and foremost for their opposition to de-Stalinization.

Having already strengthened his hold on the grass roots of the party organization, Khrushchev readily secured election by the Congress of a drastically revamped Central Committee marked by the greatest influx of new members yet. Bulganin, Pervukhin, Saburov and Voroshilov were dropped, while the earlier arch-villains were virtually read out of the party. The severity of the charges against the "anti-party group" seemed to foreshadow new purge trials on the pattern of the 1930's, although for unknown reasons these did not materialize. Molotov, however, was recalled from Vienna—on the same day that the city of Stalingrad became Volgograd.

THUS, EVER SINCE 1956 Khrushchev's course has forced the Communists to live with a paradox in denying and condemning a huge bloc of their own past. Stalin ruled Russia in increasingly autocratic fashion from 1929 to 1953, and in those twenty-four years the Soviet Union became one of the two most powerful states in the world, spreading its shadow across the whole globe. Virtually to deny Stalin's part in all this borders on the absurd. It undermines the very idea of the continuity and legitimacy

[12] See Professor Merle Fainsod, "What Happened to Collective Leadership?" in *Russia Under Khrushchev, op. cit.*, pp. 105-6.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Soviet development under communism, so assiduously cultivated by Moscow. At the same time, it has had the effect of placing relations between Soviet Russia and China under an additional, unnecessary strain. For better or for worse, Mao Tse-tung linked himself with Stalin, frequently invoking the latter's name and authority in his works. Thus, although it may have served Khrushchev's immediate political purposes to destroy the Stalin image, Mao obviously had no such interest. The Chinese were willing to go along with Moscow to the extent of deprecating what they euphemistically term Stalin's "errors," but they have understandably balked at his wholesale demolition.[13] The problem of Stalin's place in history must remain of more than casual interest for the Chinese even after the death of Mao Tse-tung, because through Mao's identification with Stalin and Stalinist policies it bears on the legitimacy of the entire development of Chinese communism from the twenties to the sixties.

In sum, the balance sheet of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization policy is by no means wholly in the black. On the contrary, though it admittedly would require careful handling, at least a partial restoration of the Stalin image would appear to hold certain advantages for the Soviet leadership. Among other things, it would probably improve Moscow's relations with China, and many of the more militant Asian, African and Latin American parties.

At present Khrushchev can stifle internal criticism, but after he is gone from the scene, his successors may well want to dissociate themselves from *his* "errors" and the handicaps of his policy. In that event they may well hark back to Khrushchev's own words written in 1939: "The biography of Comrade Stalin is the glorious epic of our Bolshevik party."[14] Except for the adjective, it is hard to quarrel with him.

A. J. Groth

(Mr. Groth is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Davis.)

[13] This feeling is best expressed in a 1956 Chinese Politburo statement cited by Brzezinski: "In our opinion Stalin's mistakes take second place to his achievements." Z. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc,* New York, Praeger, 1961, p. 278. Cf. D. S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-1961,* Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 48.

[14] *Stalin,* New York, Workers Library Publishers, 1940, p. 89. Thus wrote Khrushchev in commemoration of Stalin's 60th birthday on December 21, 1939.

Censorship in Russia: A Note

"AS WE LEAVE the confinement of serf censorship," Lenin wrote in 1905, "we do not want to, and will not, enter the prison of bourgeois-mercenary literary relationships. We want to create, and will create, a free press not only in the police sense but also in the sense that it is free from capital, free from careerism; and free, moreover, from bourgeois anarchical individualism." ("Party Organization and Party Literature," *Novaia zhizn,* No. 12, November 1905.)

The limitations of Lenin's definition of freedom of the press were brought home to the writer during a visit to the USSR last year, when he was able to examine briefly a curious volume entitled *Svodny spisok knig, podlezhashchikh isklinchenin iz bibliotek i knigotorgovoi seti, Chast II.* (Summary list of books subject to withdrawal from libraries and the trading network, Part II).

Many of the titles in the list were of obvious political significance or were listed under authors who have been in disgrace. Titles of innocuous books, such as old school texts on non-political subjects or outdated technical literature, which must have numbered many thousands, were absent. (These are probably covered by separate, open lists, or are simply turned in for pulping at the discretion of booksellers, librarians, or local officials.) The "Summary List" thus is undoubtedly a political selection and, for this reason, was distributed confidentially. Each copy was numbered, indicating that distribution of the list was restricted to official organizations such as state libraries, cultural institutions, ministries which have their own training schemes, libraries, book distributors and, last but not least, secondhand book dealers. Part II was edited by a certain I. Shefer and passed for publication by the All-Union Book Chamber in Moscow on July 12, 1961; and the edition was fairly large, numbering something under 35,000 copies. Some details about the size and content of Part I were later made available to the writer by an extremely

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reliable source. The publication as a whole is of considerable interest in that it sheds a gleam of light on something we know all too little about—the workings of the internal censorship system in the USSR.

PERHAPS THE MOST surprising thing about the "Summary List" is its size. Part II contains no less than 10,000 titles listed in alphabetical order (20 to 25 titles on each of 460 pages)—and this for a period of only a little more than two decades, 1918-41. Part I, which was issued in 1960, is said to be *twice* as big. Thus the complete "summary" must comprise some 30,000 proscribed books!

At first glance this figure seems staggering, but a little reflection on the punctiliousness of the Soviet censorship will suggest that it is no more than realistic. The total number of books published in the USSR from 1918 to 1941 on political and allied subjects—economics, history, literature, and the arts—must have numbered well over two hundred thousand. Considering the extent of the political purges in all fields of Soviet life during these years and the literary zeal of a Bukharin or Trotsky, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of the works published should have been proscribed for containing some shade of heretical thought.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to attempt more than a bare outline of the contents of the list. Let us begin with Part II since this is the part we know most about. Rather more than half the entries are works of individual authors, mainly memoirs and political tracts. In addition, there are collections of reports and documents as well as a number of works (*materialy*) by scholarly bodies such as Academies of Sciences or Institutes of Higher Learning in all parts of the country. There are also a few books of reference, including for instance six address and information handbooks (*adresno-spravochnye* knigi) for areas as diverse as Moscow, the Ukraine, and Transcaucasia in 1925-28.

Yet, despite its variety of content, Part II is obviously only a subsidiary compilation: it omits the main deviationist classics of the period. Trotsky, the archdemon, is represented by only three or four works from the middle 1920's including his essay "How the Revolution was Armed"; his collected writings, published in Moscow in 1925-27, are not listed. Zinoviev is down for only one book, *Socialism and the War,* on which he collaborated with Lenin in 1919, although the edition specifically mentioned in the Summary List appeared in Moscow in 1924; there is no mention of his 16-volume collected works published in 1924-26. Kamenev is similarly neglected, his name appearing only once, together with Stalin's, for "Against Trotskyism: (Leninism or Trotskyism)," published in the Crimea in 1925. Bukharin is not listed at all. The writer was not able to check up on whether the list included any of the earlier works of members of the "anti-party group," Beria, or individual literary and political scapegoats. Stalin's writings, understandably, were not included.

All this suggests that the really "hot" material churned out in these years went into Part I; indeed, the fact was confirmed to the writer by the source mentioned earlier. It is possible, too, that Part I was classified on a higher level of state secrecy and thus made less readily accessible than Part II. Otherwise there would seem to be no reason for the compilation of two alphabetical lists instead of one.

APART FROM its contents, the appearance of the "Summary List" in 1960-61 is in itself of considerable interest. It is primarily a reaffirmation of a long tradition of censorial proscription. A similar list came out in the mid-1930's; another was issued in 1949; and yet another was evidently in circulation in 1958. What we have here, therefore, is merely the latest in a series of proscription lists, each of which has no doubt included most of the titles from the preceding compilations, with additions and omissions in accordance with changes in the party line.

At the same time, the 1960-61 edition has some topical interest. An informant told the writer that while Part I merely reflected the continuing effort of the authorities to round up stray deviationist classics, Part II was to be used to call in all books showing the influence of the cult of the individual. There is probably a good deal of truth in the first part of his suggestion, but the second does not seem fully adequate. The chief objection is one of timing. The unmasking of Stalin started in earnest in February 1956 and therefore would hardly seem to explain the appearance of a proscription list nearly five and a half years later. Moreover, a large proportion of the titles listed in Part II first appeared in the early 1920's—many while Lenin was still alive—and could not be placed in the category of writings influenced by the Stalin cult.

Obviously, other more complex reasons must have entered into the compilation of Part II. For instance, the address books referred to earlier may have been found embarrassing because they provided information on Mensheviks or Trotskyites who disappeared and have never been rehabilitated. Other items included in Part II, such as *The Komsomol in the Village, a Collection of Documents on Fundamental Questions* (Moscow, 1925) or *The Soviets under Communism* (Moscow, 1925), to mention but two titles, may have been proscribed because they contained predictions on the growth of Soviet prosperity and the advent of the Communist society that either have since been invalidated or perhaps contradict the latest official pronouncements on these matters.

The success of the censors in purging the nation's bookshelves is not, however, assured. True, they can easily retrieve offending volumes from bookshops, state libraries, and other organizations, and can bury them in closed archives for the sole perusal of orthodox scholars. Indeed, very few of the older titles can now be left on

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

shelves accessible to the public. But unfortunately for them, the censors have no control over hundreds of thousands of tiny private libraries, and the books they want most to withdraw from circulation are precisely those which the owners are probably least willing to surrender. It is no secret that a black market in proscribed books exists and that it is quite beyond the realm of official censorship. This is where some, at least, of the 30,000 blacklisted titles may still be found. All the authorities can do is hope that copies of these books will eventually pass into the hands of secondhand book dealers, who of course must know what to do with them. This is why extensive lists, such as the 1960-61 "Summary List," must be constantly compiled and distributed. They are at once a monument to the tenacity of free-thinking blackmarketeers and a manifestation of the scrupulous care which the Soviet authorities devote to obliterating embarrassing ideas, events, and names from the past.

* * *

(To protect his sources, the author of the article above, a longtime student of Soviet affairs, prefers to remain anonymous.)

Announcing

A Special Issue of PROBLEMS OF COMMUNISM
(March-April 1963)

A Survey of Developments in the Communist World Since the Death of Stalin

A Discussion about Stalinism ..... *Peter Wiles*
The Role of the Leader ..... *Howard Swearer*
Soviet Internal Politics ..... *Wolfgang Leonhard*
Foreign Policy ..... *Helmut Sonnenfeldt*
International Communism ..... *Richard Lowenthal*
Economic Developments ..... *Gregory Grossman*
Ideological Convolutions and Transmutations ..... *Erich Goldhagen*
The Cultural Scene ..... *Ronald Hingley*
The Past Reburied ..... *Leopold Labedz*
Russia and China ..... *Mark Mancall*
Eastern Europe ..... *Robert Bass*
Books on Stalin ..... *Francis Randall*

Individual readers and organizations desiring to obtain additional copies of the March-April issue may contact the nearest office of the US Information Service, or—if in the United States—write to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, DC. A list of USIS offices appears on the opposite page.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Where to Obtain *Problems of Communism*

NOTE: In the United States, *Problems of Communish* is available on sale at the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C. Price per copy: $.35; subscription price: $1.50 a year; additional $.50 for foreign mailing if orders are placed in the United States. Outside the United States, single copies or subscriptions may be obtained free of charge through requests addressed to the nearest office of the United States Information Service. Following are the locations of USIS offices:

EUROPE

AUSTRIA—Vienna, Salzburg
BELGIUM—Brussels
DENMARK—Copenhagen
FINLAND—Helsinki
FRANCE—Paris, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Strasbourg, Tours
GERMANY—Bonn, Berlin, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Stuttgart
GREAT BRITAIN—London
ICELAND—Reykjavik
ITALY—Rome, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Trieste, Turin
NETHERLANDS—The Hague
NORWAY—Oslo
PORTUGAL—Lisbon
SPAIN—Madrid, Barcelona, Seville
(See note below on the Spanish-language edition published in Latin America)
SWEDEN—Stockholm
SWITZERLAND—Bern, Geneva
YUGOSLAVIA—Belgrade, Zagreb

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

AFGHANISTAN—Kabul
CEYLON—Colombo
CYPRUS—Nicosia
GREECE—Athens, Thessaloniki
INDIA—New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras
IRAN—Tehran, Isfahan, Khorromshahr, Meshed, Tabriz
IRAQ—Baghdad
ISRAEL—Tel Aviv
JORDAN—Amman
LEBANON—Beirut
NEPAL—Katmandu
PAKISTAN—Karachi, Lahore, Dacca
SAUDI ARABIA—Jidda
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC—Damascus
TURKEY—Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Adana
UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC—Cairo, Alexandria
YEMEN—Taiz

FAR EAST

AUSTRALIA—Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne
BURMA—Rangoon, Mandalay, Moulmein
CAMBODIA—Phnom Penh
HONG KONG
INDONESIA—Djakarta, Medan, Surabaya, Jogjakarta
JAPAN—Tokyo, Fukuoka, Yokohama, Nagoya, Sapporo, Osaka
KOREA—Seoul, Pusan, Taegu, Kwangju
LAOS—Vientiane, Pakse, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet
MALAYA—Kuala Lumpur, Penang
NEW ZEALAND—Wellington
PHILIPPINES—Manila, Cebu
SINGAPORE
TAIWAN—Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung
THAILAND—Bangkok, Chiengmai, Korat, Songkhla, Udorn, Ubol
VIET NAM—Saigon, Hue, Can Tho, Dalat

AFRICA

ALGERIA—Algiers
BURUNDI—Usumbura
CAMEROUN—Yaounde, Douala
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC—Bangui
CHAD—Fort Lamy
DAHOMEY—Cotonou
ETHIOPIA—Addis Ababa, Asmara
FEDERATION OF RHODESIA AND NYASALAND—Salisbury, Blantyre, Lusaka
GABON—Libreville
GHANA—Accra
GUINEA—Conakry
IVORY COAST—Abidjan
KENYA—Nairobi
LIBERIA—Monrovia
LIBYA—Benghazi, Tripoli
MALAGASY REPUBLIC—Tananarive
MALI—Bamako
MOROCCO—Rabat, Casablanca, Fez, Marrakech, Tangier
NIGER—Niamey
NIGERIA—Lagos, Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna
REPUBLIC OF CONGO—Brazzaville
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO—Leopoldville, Stanleyville, Bukaru
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA—Pretoria, Johannesburg, Capetown
SENEGAL—Dakar
SIERRA LEONE—Freetown
SOMALI REPUBLIC—Mogadiscio
SUDAN—Khartoum
TANGANYIKA—Dar-es-Salaam
TOGO—Lome
TUNISIA—Tunis
UGANDA—Kampala
UPPER VOLTA—Ouagadougou
ZANZIBAR—Zanzibar

LATIN AMERICA

A list of USIS posts where the Spanish-language edition *(Problemas del Comunismo)* may be obtained is published in its current issue. The English edition is also available at these posts and in Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Curitiba, Porto Alegre, Recife, Salvador, Sao Paulo.)

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED